
INFLORENZA
Heroism, martyrdom and decadence
in Milesvale's forest hell

INFLORENZA

A roleplaying game
of epic horror
centered on the characters
and the story

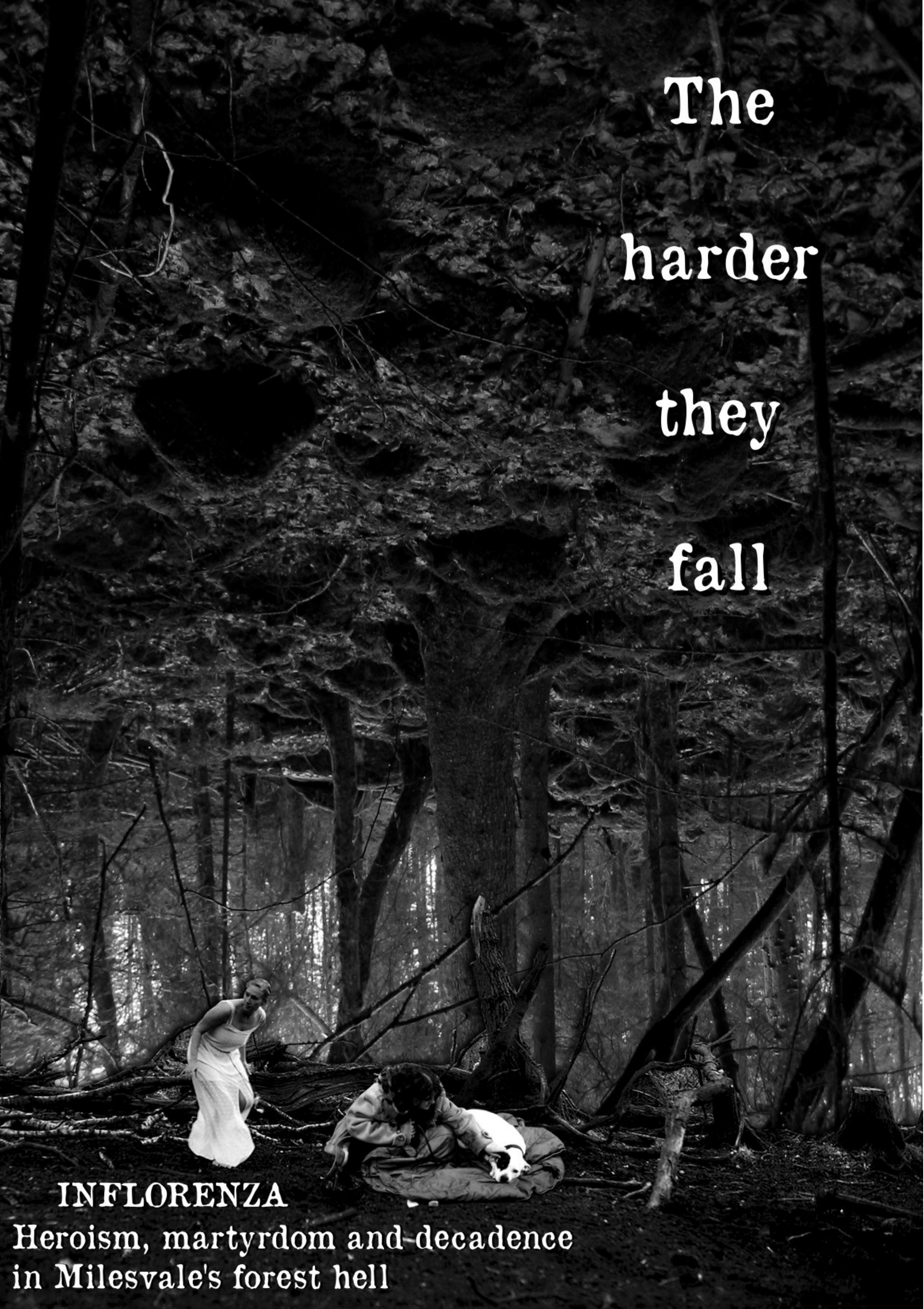
BETA-VERSION

by
Thomas MUNIER

Live in hell
Fight for your soul
Die out of love

This game is dedicated to the players of the campaigns
The Rose's Thorns and *Prometheus Foundation*:

Anna
Fabien
Hélène
Jean-Philippe
Laurent
Namik
Romain
Silver
Thomas
Tristan
Victorien


The harder they fall
INFLORENZA
Heroism, martyrdom and decadence in Milesvale's forest hell

CREDITS

Text by Thomas Munier, translation by Côme Martin

Playtesters

Agénor, Anna, Antoine, Catherine, Christophe, Coline, David, Denis, Emmanuelle, Fabrice, Flavie, Géraldine, Gilles, Guillaume, Hervé, Jean, Jean-François, Jean-Philippe, Jeff, Jérôme, Josian, Julien, Julien (de Vannes), Kevin C, Kevin R, Laurent, Malvina, Manuel, Mewen, Michel, Miriam, Namik, Nathalie, Patricia, Pierre, Pierre A, Quillian, Raphaël, Renaud, Romaric, Rozanne, Simon, Sophie, Tiphanie, Vianney, Yoann, Yoni.

GM playtesters

Jean-Philippe Baudry, Valentin Crépeau, Fabrice Da Silva.

Proofreaders (french version)

Laury "Shiryu" Chable, Catherine Colin-Cousseau, Valentin Crépeau, Philippe Debar, Julien De Monte, Guillaume Fouillet, Fabien Hildwein, Tony Martin, Jean-Marc Moro, Colin Niaudet, Fabrice Pouillot, Maud Rossi, Frédéric Sintes.

Proofreaders (english version)

Christo Meid.

Free fonts used

Day Roman, Mom's Typewriter, Old Newspaper Type, Powderfinger Type.

Iconography

The cover is an extract from an engraving by Gustave Doré. His work is in the public domain.

Literary credits

† Shub-Niggurath is a creation of Howard Philips Lovecraft (1890-1937), Hastur is a creation of Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914?), the King in Yellow is a creation of Robert Williams Chambers (1865-1933). Their works are in the public domain.
† The novel *The Naked Lunch* of William S. Burroughs (1914-1997) is a source of inspiration.
† Orgone is a word invented by psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957).

Warning

This game offers content that chan be considered violent or shocking. I want to let people know I'm addressing a mature audience. I'm also warning you the violent and shocking content is contextual. I'm presenting a fictional universe and don't want to make the apology of ideologies or practices that go against morality. When ideologies and religions are mentioned, they are so in a futuristic extrapolation. I'm making these extrapolations in a fictional context and in no way offer a judgement of value.

I'm against any form of animal exploitation. It's present in some of the fictional contexts presented here but it is in no way a legitimization of animal exploitation in the real world.

Resources & Community

On the Outsider blog, in the Milesvale / Inflorenza section (in French):

http://outsider.rolepod.net/millevaux/inflorenza-2/

You'll find playing aids to print and links to the game's message board. On the message board, you'll find play reports of my *Inflorenza* games and other people's. You can ask me questions there and share your experience of the game.

If you post a play report, I'll be happy to read you, and it will be very useful to the community.



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THEMES



PLAYING AIDS

Essentials

Definitions

† During a **turn**, one player is under the spotlights: she controls her character but also the setting and the extras.
† A **conflict** is a moment in the turn during which players use the rules so their characters reach their **objectives**.
† A **simple conflict** is a conflict involving only one player.
† A **duel conflict** is a conflict in which two players roll dice and compare their results to decide on the conflict's outcome.
† A **multiple conflict** is a duel conflict extended to more than two parties.
† The **objective** is what the player in conflict is trying to reach.
† The **character sheet** is made of **sentences**. You **use** a sentence in a conflict when it's a motivation, a resource or a handicap. To write a sentence, you can get inspiraton by rolling on the themes table.
† The **creation sentence** is the first sentence on a character sheet. It must include the verb *to want* and a link with another character's sentence.
† A **die of sacrifice** is a die which rolls 1 or 2.
† A **die of power** is a die which rolls 11 or 12.
† A **die of suffering** is a die which rolls between 3 and 10.
† To **sacrifice a sentence** means striking it out because of a die of sacrifice.

The game universe

In the future, long after a cataclysm. A haunted forest covers the ruins of civilization. Humankind survives in a dark, fantastic, feudal world. Supernatural monsters, the Horlas, terrorize people. Egregore, the sum of all human hauntings, shapes events into nightmares. Milesvale's future is between the hands of heroes, bastards and martyrs of the forest hell.

The game's intentions

† Players play the role of heroes, bastards and martyrs in Milesvale's forest hell. They will ally or compete between each other.
† Each player plays a character to whom she'll have to impose sacrifices to control his fate.
† It's a roleplaying game of epic horror, centered on the character and the story.

NANOFLORENZA /Rules memo

Dice of sacrifice	Dice of power	Dice of suffering	Ability die

Themes : 1 Madness 2 Memory 3 Nature 4 Hold 5 Egregore 6 Society 7 Clan 8 Religion 9 Science 10 Love 11 Drives 12 Flesh

Creating a character (during a player's first turn)

† Roll a die and write a **creation sentence**. It must include the verb *to want* and a link with another character's sentence.

Ending a turn

† End your turn **without a conflict** (roll a die and write a sentence).
† End your turn by starting a **simple conflict**, a **duel conflict** or a **multiple conflict**. Players not involved in the conflict can **ally** to one of the players in the conflict.

Conflict, rolling the dice

† Each player rolls one die for each sentence used. Maximum 12 dice, divided by the number of sides.
† 1-2 = die of sacrifice / 3-10 = die of suffering / 11-12 = die of power.
† **A single die of sacrifice** = it kills all the other dice of this side.
† **Several dice of sacrifice** = they contaminate all the other dice of this side.
† **Dice of sacrifice and suffering allow you to win the conflict**.
† **If there is a duel or multiple conflict:**
Advantage to the side with the most dice of sacrifice.
If no dice of sacrifice = advantage to the side with the most dice of power.
If no dice of power = advantage to the side with the most dice of suffering.
If it's a tie = you choose between a compromise or a status quo.

Conflict, consequences

† If you have dice of power and dice of suffering, you can **ignore** the dice of suffering.
† You **ration** dice of power and suffering (no more than the number of players of your own side).
† You **roll again** the dice of power and suffering.
† Each player involved in the conflict **circulates** the dice. She can keep some or give some to other players. Those who weren't her allies can refuse the dice given.

† **One die of sacrifice** = strike out a sentence.
† **One die of power / suffering** = write a sentence of power / suffering.

Every sentence is sacrificed = the character is eliminated.
A total of 12 non-sacrificed sentences = the character fulfills his destiny.

Themes table

	Theme	Examples
1	**Madness**	1 hallucinations 2 fear 3 phobia 4 personality disorder 5 haunting 6 megalomania 7 mind parasites 8 nightmares 9 omniscience 10 possession 11 lucidity excess 12 drugs
2	**Memory**	1 tarot of the past 2 divination 3 oblivion 4 memories 5 tragic past 6 liens 7 genealogy 8 total amnesia 9 vengeance 10 testimony 11 belief 12 lie
3	**Nature**	1 forest 2 trees 3 animals 4 plants 5 mushrooms 6 parasites 7 infections 8 survival 9 journey 10 sea 11 mountain 12 desert
4	**Hold**	1 fertility 2 mutation 3 animalism 4 orgy 5 vermin 6 Shub-Niggurath 7 stain 8 monstrosity 9 epidemic 10 degenerescence 11 perversion 12 social corruption
5	**Egregore**	1 legends 2 rumors 3 psychic remanence 4 specters 5 mythological entities 6 sorcery 7 Horlas 8 haunting 9 strong emotions 10 tale 11 supernatural 12 bonds of fate
6	**Society**	1 city 2 state 3 morality 4 feudality 5 laws 6 war 7 anarchy 8 Outside 9 journeys 10 trade 11 philosophy 12 people
7	**Clan**	1 secret society 2 tribe 3 sect 4 friends 5 family 6 faction 7 alliance 8 debt 9 duty 10 lodges 11 lineage 12 ways
8	**Religion**	1 faith 2 miracle 3 totem 4 taboo 5 heresy 6 piety 7 divinity 8 faithful 9 dogma 10 transgression 11 curse 12 unbelief
9	**Science**	1 alchemy 2 craftsmanship 3 post-apocalypse 4 vulgar relic 5 wonderful relic 6 endemic technology 7 artifact from outside 8 firearm 9 fuel-powered vehicle 10 automatons 11 obscurantism 12 books
10	**Love**	1 passion 2 hate 3 desire 4 fascination 5 pact 6 betrayal 7 sacrifice 8 respect 9 filiation 10 fidelity 11 lie 12 trust
11	**Drives**	1 pride 2 greed 3 lust 4 envy 5 sloth 6 gluttony 7 anger 8 prudence 9 temperance 10 justice 11 courage 12 unconscious
12	**Flesh**	1 fight 2 sex 3 beauty 4 promiscuity 5 sickness 6 putrefaction 7 death 8 bestiality 9 prowesses 10 hunger 11 pain 12 mutilation

Tiny encyclopedia

Blowback:
Return of a spell to its sender.

Egregore:
Egregore is the remanence of all human hauntings. It influences Milesvale's very shape. Egregore is part of the Horlas' development and dictates the codes of sorcery.

Golden Age:
Historical period before the disaster. Many think Milesvale was always like this and there was no disaster nor a Golden Age.

Hold:
Hold is the essence of the forest, a mutagen agent carrying degenerescence and affecting animals, humans and plants. It's the energy of sorcery.

Horlas:
A term, in Milesvale's superstition, for monsters and demons haunting the forest and threatening humankind with extinction.

Horla Deity:
The Horla deities are amongst the first Horlas to have appeared after Disaster Day. They gather massive quantities of hold and egregore, which gives them an almost divine nature. Only Shub-Niggurath surpasses them.
A Horla deity is the incarnation of one of the principles of hold (degenerescence, fertility, mutation...).

King in Yellow:
This divinity, dressed in yellow tatters and a burqa hiding its face, wants to be praised and spread madness. It is associated with cults of disorder and with the yellow opium, a powerful drug giving transcendental visions and causing madness.

Memory Deadzone:
The frontier between intact emotional memories and older ones, erased because of oblivion.

Oblivion:
This hereditary trouble concerns most of Milesvale's inhabitants. Oblivion affects emotional memory. People only record a memory of events during three years. Know-how memory isn't affected. Sometimes, memories suddenly float back, they are called **flashbacks**.

Orgones:
Orgones are organic fluids, at once a source of energy, a drug and Milesvale's most powerful aphrodisiac. They can be synthesized with orgone accumulators.

Putrid language:
A language of grunting and gurgling. It can be spoken by humans, most animals, and Horlas. It's the mother of all languages, the language of sorcery rituals and the language of Shub-Niggurath.

Shub-Niggurath:
A divinity associated with nature, fertility and degeneresence, Shub-Niggurath is the Mythological Entity ruling over Milesvale and said to have created it. Most humans don't know it exists.

Sorcery:
Sorcery is the art of manipulating hold and egregore. It is practiced instinctively or through apprenticeship. A sorcerer never completely controls the effects of his magic. Hold and egregore manipulate him in return, altering his body and mind.

Wall of Shame:
A huge wall, said to be impassable, around Milesvale. Some say there is a world beyond: the Outside.



RULES

I pray that my enemies are strong
because I'm very eager to fight.

Presentation

Roleplaying games

In a roleplaying game, players have a conversation during which they imagine a fictitious adventure. Each one chooses at least one **character** in this shared fiction. There are also **extras** with no appointed player. Players use the rules to agree on what happens in the fiction, when dialogue isn't enough or when rules allow them to have a more interesting adventure.

A roleplaying session can be an entertainment, a playful challenge, a form of art, a virtual reality experience. Or all of the above at the same time. Players are their own audience. They're trying to play a game which interests them. There is no external audience to entertain or psychological tests to pass.

Roleplaying games are practiced in isolated sessions or in campaigns (a series of sessions forming a single long adventure).

The game universe

After a calamity which has led civilization to its end. A haunted forest, called Milesvale, covers the world. People survive in a dark, fantastical feudal world. They fight for it against nature and supernatural monsters, the Horlas. Oblivion gnaws on them, they forgot the world's past and keep on losing the most intimate details of their lives. Hold, an uncontrollable biological phenomenon, causes mutations in potentially all beings and things. Egregore, a psychic thread born out of all human hauntings, shapes events into nightmares. The Horlas, monsters born out of hold and egregore, which can take many forms, spread terror in the forest and in human enclaves.

This world's history is in the hands of a few individuals. They are gorged with egregore. An unusual fate awaits them. They are the heroes, bastards and martyrs of Milesvale's forest hell.

Intentions and principles

† **Players play heroes, bastards and martyrs in Milesvale's forest hell. These characters will ally or fight each other.**

† **Each player must accept sacrifices for her character in order to control his fate.**

† **The game is centered on the characters.** Players should be interested in the conflicts directly involving their characters. They should be more interested in the relations between the characters than in the discovery of the game universe.

† **The game is also centered on the shared creation of an epic horror story.** A tragedy of heroes, bastards and martyrs in Milesvale's forest hell.

Principles of this game

† **You can play isolated sessions with different characters and settings. You can also reuse the same characters and setting during several sessions. This series of sessions is called a campaign.**

† A player assumes the function of Confidant. **There are two playing modes, Red Card and *Carte Blanche*.** In the two modes, the Confidant is careful to explain the rules, relay the game universe, help other players to develop their characters and build their part of the adventure. In *Carte Blanche* mode, she has additional responsibilities for the story.

† **This is not a literary game.** Players are asked to explore their character and the story, to say and do what they like, as long as it corresponds to their feelings and the logic of events. Spending too much time and energy building a sophisticated story would hamper on the game's rhythm and pleasure.

Summary of a game session

The players play **characters**, heroes, bastards and martyrs in a **setting**, Milesvale's forest hell, with **extras**. One of the players also assumes the role of **Confidant** and hosts the session. There are two playing modes, **Red Card and *Carte Blanche***. In *Carte Blanche* mode, the Confidant has extended responsibilities.

Each character has a **sheet** on which his player will write **sentences** telling his story, representing his motivation, resources or handicaps... and hit points.

The session is broken down into **turns**. Each player plays a turn during which her character has the main role. Each creates her character during her first turn (or before, under some conditions). A character can be eliminated during a session; if so, his player creates another one.

During her turn, in Red Card mode, the player describes everything that happens to her character, and ends the turn when she wants to stop deciding everything or automatically succeed. **In *Carte Blanche* mode**, the Confidant describes what is happening.

The player can end her turn **without a conflict**, or with a **simple conflict** in which the character faces adversity, or with a **duel or multiple conflict** against one or several players.

When the turn is over, the player to the left gets to speak, and so on. At the beginning of any turn, it can be decided to stop the session at the end of the turn, if it suits the adventure, or if it is getting late.

Tension and competition between the characters is the cement of the game's mood. But this competition remains optional. It can be limited to minor tensions, hidden by politeness between the characters, or to a debate between the players for the story's control, but it's rarely entirely absent from the game.

However, at the contrary of their characters, the players fully cooperate to end up with an adventure captivating everyone.

Red Card and *Carte Blanche*

Inflorenza offers two modes of playing. The responsibilities of the Confidant on the story differs in each. It's up to the group to choose their favorite mode. It can be changed from one session to the next.

In Red Card mode, each player controls her character and the environment around him (plot, setting, extras). When the characters and their stories clash against one another, players negotiate about what's happening in the fiction. The Confidant is simply a host.

Red Card is the mode by default. If it's not specified, everything that's said in this book relates to Red Card mode.

In *Carte Blanche* mode, the Confidant has the last word on what happens in the adventure. She plays the plot, the setting and the extras. Players control their characters. **Within the rules, exceptions concerning *Carte Blanche* mode are presented in boxed texts.**

In the following pages, it's assumed players use the creative rights they are offered to talk about their character, say what is happening, write down sentences or define conflict objectives. But in fact, a player can lack inspiration, confidence, or would prefer someone else to frame a scene (setting and extras), makessure that *Inflorenza*'s aesthetic is respected, that everything is coherent, or decide on the setbacks and advantages happening to her character.

In this type of situation, if the player hesitates or asks for support, the other players and the Confidant can ask her questions to help her take a decision, make several suggestions, or directly prescribe a decision or event. The player still has the last word. Even if she asked for creative help, she can always rely on a more personal idea when everything's said and done.

Prerequisites

Preparation

You can play this game with no preparation; but if she wants to go deeper, the Confidant can document herself on the game universe. She can also, by herself or in agreement with the other players, prepare a **theater**, the sketch of a place and initial situation (see the *Theater* chapter p. XXX).

Preliminary measures

At the beginning of the session, the players can discuss the adventure's moral content. They can define which "adult" elements (sex, violence...) can be presented and with which level of detail (suggested, described, overexposed). They can also agree that everybody will make an effort to not upset anyone or that, at the contrary, it's allowed to leave one's comfort zone, as long as players still make sure that no one feels foolish or attacked.

Accessories

You need twelve twelve-sided dice to play the game for the whole group. For a version with twelve six-sided dice, see *Optional rules / Inflorenza Sei* page XXX. Each player takes a white sheet, something to write on it, and extra sheets just in case.

A copy of the *Themes table* must be available for the players. These themes form the game's aesthetic and orient:
† The personality, motivations, resources and fate of the characters.
† The problematics of the adventure created by the players.
† The extras, settings, events and creatures of the session.



How a turn takes place

Turns

The turn is the basic temporal brick. It's centered on one of the characters. There's no game or character creation before the first turn. At the beginning of the session, the player who will play first is chosen. One by one, clockwise, each player takes a turn during which she creates her character (unless he was created beforehand) and puts him in a situation. **During her turn, a player has the last word on a number of things and her character has the main role**, but the other players and their characters can still step in. Turns can be switched if it makes sense.

When one of the characters is eliminated, his player recreates one right away, so she always has a character to play.

When everybody around the table had a turn, you go round again, with the same characters. The session always ends at the end of a turn.

Sentences

During a session, **sentences must be written**. They can be short, crass and misspelled. They contain basic information and must be practical to use during the game.
Sentence, example 1: I fight with my father's sword.
Sentence, example 2: I think she's worthy of my trust.

Before EACH sentence is written down, the player is invited to roll a die, look up the themes table and see which theme corresponds to the result of the roll. She takes inspiration from this theme to write her sentence. This allows to transpose the game universe.

But the player can ignore this rule out of a need for fluidity or because she wants to keep her initial idea. She can also choose which theme she uses instead of rolling the die, or roll the die multiple times.

After each sentence is written, the player reads it out loud and explains, if need be, what it is about with some narration.

Carte Blanche: **When a player writes a new sentence, the Confidant controls its content.** She can ask the player to rewrite her sentence to reinforce the logic or aesthetic of the game, the balance of luck, or the respect of the rules. She can also impose the sentence's content, or part of its content, to her.

But the Confidant would be well advised to make use of these rights moderately. If she offers a sentence that goes against the character's will (making him fall in love with someone, making him take an object back), she must have the player's consent or be backed by the conflict rules. In most cases, she'll rely on her common sense and the players' fair-play, or limit herself to suggestions.

Beginning of a turn: creating a character

If the active player doesn't have a character, she creates a new one. To this end, she can **invent** a character from scratch or **change** a previously introduced extra into a character.

She takes a blank sheet, it will be her **character sheet**. She writes a first sentence on it: **the creation sentence**. This sentence must respect three rules:

† Include the verb *to want* (conjugated freely with any subject);

† Be related to another character's sentence (if there are any);

† And, like with any other sentence, it can be inspired by one of the themes. This third rule is optional.

The creation sentence is the only one necessarily including the verb *to want* and the relation with another character's sentence.

This creation sentence is important: it gives depth to the character as well as an objective and a link with the other characters, it starts the adventure.

Creation sentence, example 1: I want to punish all of those who talk with animals. *(Theme: Nature)*

Creation sentence, example 2: I want to flee those who pursue me because I speak the animal language. (*Theme: Drives, related to the creation sentence of the character of example 1)*

The player can invent a name for her character right away or keep him anonymous as long as she wants.

The Confidant also creates a character and plays turns, unless she prefers to focus on hosting the session.

Carte Blanche: The Confidant doesn't create a character and doesn't play turns. She focuses on controlling the setting and the extras.

Starting a turn, choosing when a session ends

The session can last as many sessions as you want. At the start of each turn, if the session has lasted long enough, if there are time constraints or if the adventure is reaching its climax or conclusion, the players can decide the session will end at the end of this turn. The end of a session can be decided even if everyone hasn't played the same number of turns. The last turn follows the usual rules, but the players must make sure to conclude their story.

Ending a turn, ending a session

At the end of a turn, the player to the left of the active player starts a new turn. **Unless this turn was defined as the last one; in which case, the session ends.**

If the players want to play a campaign, which means continuing the adventure during several sessions, they keep their character sheets but **blacken all sacrificed sentences**. If the character is eliminated during the next session and a new one must be created, the blackened sentences are not included when counting the number of sacrificed sentences. Players can rewrite their non-blackened sentences as a way of renewing, refocusing, aging the character, amplifying his ambitions. If the creation sentence is rewritten, it must always include the verb *to want* and a link with another character.

The players note in which order they were playing their turns, and the name of the next active player. She will be the one starting the first turn at the next session.

Eliminating a character, creating a new one

When a character is eliminated, it means he's dead, captured, missing, unable to act or that he has renounced to his condition of hero, bastard or martyr. Unless he's in an even more mysterious state.

If a player wants to play another character, she eliminates the current one.

If the character is eliminated because he has reached twelve non-sacrificed sentences, he fulfills his destiny, either in heroic death, dignified exile or the accession to a status, a superior nature, like the ultimate hero, bastard or martyr.

The affected player must tell how her character is eliminated, in relation with what happened in the adventure.

Once her character is eliminated, the affected player takes a new sheet and creates a new character, unless it's the end of the session and there are no conflicts left to be played.

To create her new character, the player counts how many non-sacrificed sentences her former character had on his sheet and rewrites as many sentences. **If the eliminated character had no non-sacrificed sentences or if he has fulfilled his destiny**, she then creates a new character with only one sentence. **If the end of the session is near**, she can be content with counting the number of sentences this new character has access to and consider this number as potential dice in case of a conflict, rather than writing sentences.

The new character may be a character previously eliminated, whether her own or one of another player, as long as there was at least one character created between the two. To avoid tarnishing the aura of fulfilled characters, it's better to reuse them only exceptionally.

The player takes the identity of this former character, not the resources his sentences represent. His sheet's content is ignored, both in the content of his sentences and their number.

During a turn

During a turn, the active player tells the present of her character. **What he feels, what he thinks, what he remembers, what he looks like, what he's carrying, what he's doing. She can also say what he perceives, what happens to him**, in other words control the setting, the plot, the extras. She can be brief or add many details.
The player describes what happens, example: *Arnaud, the focus player, says Isaac, his character, is cold. He's afraid, lost in the forest. He remembers he was talking to a mysterious lady, then had an absence and woke up there. He's hirsute, worn*

out. He carries a sword covered with blood. He follows his tracks backwards to know where he's coming from. Suddenly, a bear (an extra) comes out of the shadows and attacks him. He kills the bear with a single sword blow. This force and rage were unknown to him until now.

The active player must respect what was told during previous turns. With moderation, she can still ask for the other players' agreement to contradict previous facts, if she can explain such observations were lies, mistakes or illusions.

She doesn't say anything about what the other characters are doing. She can assume facts about them, but if she wants these facts to be true, she will have to ask for the concerned player's consent. If the latter refuses, the active player will have to admit this fact isn't true or ask for a duel conflict against the concerned player, turning this fact into a true one as an objective.

***Carte Blanche*:** The Confidant says **what the active character feels and what happens to him**. She reacts to the character's actions but can also be proactive. She describes the setting, introduces extras, offers adversity to the character (sometimes because the player asks for it). To this end, she mainly gets inspiration from the character's sentences to offer a setting and events linked to them.

Meanwhile, the other players can make their other characters intervene. They can say what their characters are doing and describe events, the setting or extras. The active character is under the spotlights; the other players' interventions must thus remain limited and related to the active character.

Everything is told publicly. Everything a player says, the other characters learn it through egregore, through a form of mind-reading or through premonition. A player can however decide that a character doesn't know about some pieces of information.

When the active player wants to stop deciding what is happening, she ends her turn. She has three ways to do so:
† She ends **without a conflict**;
† She ends with a **simple conflict**;
† Or she ends with a **duel or multiple conflict**.

Carte Blanche: The Confidant can ask for the turn to end with a simple conflict.

Ending a turn without a conflict

When a player wants to end her turn calmly, she ends it without a conflict. She writes on her sheet a sentence summing up what happened during the turn, adding a detail or bringing up a new fact.
Ending without a conflict, example 1: After Isaac killed the bear, Arnaud wants to write a sentence reporting this fact. He rolls a die and gets a 11 (Drives). He writes An unusual rage gave me the strength to kill this bear.
Ending without a conflict, example 2: After Isaac killed the bear, Arnaud rolls the die without any preconceived notion on the content of his sentence. He gets a 5 (Egregore) and writes The ghost of the bear is chasing me. *To justify it, he describes a ghost ectoplasm slipping out of the animal's corpse and starting to follow Isaac silently.*

Ending a turn with a simple conflict

The active player gets into a simple conflict when a climax of suspense is reached, when she wonders whether her character will manage to take a difficult decision, to succeed at a crucial action, or if a particular event related to him is possible.The character faces external or internal adversity. It can also be a tipping point, where the player wonders if the character will become a hero, a bastard or a martyr. **This conflictual situation is, if possible, related to one of the character's sentences**. If the conflict is not related to a character's sentence, it's maintained only if the character's participation seems logical and interesting. If it's an uninteresting incident, because it's not centered on the character or is only a detail of the adventure, avoid turning it into a conflict.

The active player can decide on her own to get into a simple conflict, or the Confidant or the other players can incite her to do so if they think it's illogical or regrettable that a decision, action or event happens without any difficulty.

<u>Ending with a simple conflict, example:</u> When Arnaud says he kills the bear, the others point out that it's too easy. Maybe someone has willingly left him to the dangers of the forest, and this bear attack is the consequence. Arnaud then accepts to turn this meeting with the bear into a simple conflict.

***Carte Blanche*:** There is no simple conflict for a character's decision, unless he's trying to resist from mental manipulation. There isn't either to decide of the existence of a fact or event: it's now the Confidant who decides of the existence of facts and events external to the characters. The Confidant can ask the active player to play a simple conflict if she doesn't want an action of the active player to automatically succeed, or if the character wants to resist an adversity put forward by the Confidant.

Ending a turn with a duel conflict

When opposition happens between the active player and another, inactive player, they can first negotiate. If disagreement persists, either the players rally to whoever has the last word (the active player on the setting, the extras and her character, the other players on their respective players), or they decide to start a duel conflict to settle this opposition.

Here are the oppositions that can lead to a duel conflict:

† An inactive player disagrees with what the active player is saying about their character.

† The active player wants to oppose an inactive character's action, or vice versa.

† The active player and another player may want their character to fight one another. Their interests can also clash during a scene where their characters are separated (through the magical intermediary of egregore).

† The active player has announced a simple conflict, and an inactive player is against her winning this conflict. **Before the simple conflict is played, it's turned into a duel conflict.**

Duel conflicts give savor to the game. But inactive players must remain more discreet than the active player: **a duel is only asked for if it really seems important and logical.**

If two inactive players want to start a duel, they must wait for one or the other's turn.

Ending a turn with a duel conflict, example: Let's say Arnaud declared Isaac killed the bear without playing a conflict. Laure, who plays the character of Bark, relies on her sentence This forest belongs to me *to intervene. She wants to get hold of the bear's corpse. Isaac is against it. Laure then asks for a duel conflict about the bear's corpse.*

Ending a turn with a multiple conflict

Sometimes, the wills around the table are too diverse for a duel conflict to be enough. Its principle is then extended to three sides or more if need be.

Multiple conflict, example 1: One side wants to pick the sacred mandrake, one side wants to take it to a safe place, another side wants to destroy it.
Multiple conflict, example 2: Three different sides want to hoard the last sacred mandrake.
Multiple conflict, example 3: Anselma, Deathtorch and Crucifix hold each other at gunpoint. Anselma wants to kill Deathtorch and Crucifix, Deathtorch wants to kill Anselma and protect Crucifix, Crucifix wants everyone to put down their weapons.

Defining a conflict's objective

Starting with this paragraph, the rules introduced here are valid for all the conflicts (simple, duel and multiple).

Because of egregore, the characters are aware they're in a conflict, at the crossroads of their fate. For a moment, they perceive potential consequences: what will happen if they triumph, if they fail or if they forfeit. They'll be able to act with full knowledge of these risks.

The active player defines the conflict's objective. **The objective is a fact, a decision or a result which will be reached if the active player wins the conflict.**
Objective, example 1: I have the guts to look at the head hidden in this plastic bag.
Objective, example 2: I kill the bear.
Objective, example 3: Isaac thinks he's the true master of this forest. He plays a simple conflict to know whether there is a castle bearing his arms in this forest.

The active player also defines a counter-objective, which will be reached if she loses the conflict. The counter-objective is the opposite of the objective, its inverse, or the same thing with an extra adverse effect, depending on what seems logical or interesting. The counter-objective must be a serious event for the character. If the player wants an adversity to be formidable, she must set a formidable counter-objective.

In case of a duel or multiple conflict, each side defines its objective. The objective of one side becomes the counter-objective of the other(s).
Objective in a duel, example: If Parsifal's objective is "Parsifal seduces Queen Fern," Lisa's objective can be "Parsifal doesn't seduce Queen Fern," "Parsifal sickens Queen Fern" or "Lisa seduces Queen Fern."

If it seems pertinent, **the forfeit can also be defined**, meaning what happens if the characters give up on the conflict.

The objective is what the player wants for her character: it can be negative for him. Within a simple conflict, the counter-objective is also defined by the active player, and, after all, it's only another outcome the player wants for her character, maybe an outcome she wants a little less than the objective, or which would lead her into a less comfortable direction. But even if the counter-objective has a negative aspect, it remains a possibility the active player deems interesting for the story.

The objectives, counter-objectives and forfeits can however be chosen in accordance with what the character thinks or plans.

A player can start a duel to ask for the elimination of an opponent's character as an objective, but the opponent must give her consent. If she agrees, she can ask for the elimination of the character of the player who started the duel as a **counter-objective**. If the latter refuses, she must reword her objective.

The conflict's objective can be to avoid the elimination of one of the characters, if the concerned player agrees. She can ask for the elimination of the character in conflict as a counter-objective.

Objective of elimination, example: Bark (inactive player) orders Isaac (active player) to commit suicide. Isaac's objective: to survive and eliminate Bark.

<u>Objective of non-elimination, example</u>: At the end of her turn, Clelia ended hanging to a branch above a cliff. During his turn, Sandro asks for a simple conflict with the objective: "Sandro saves Clelia from a deadly fall" and the counter-objective: "Clelia makes a deadly fall." Clelia's player accepts, but asks to add Sandro's elimination to the counter-objective. If the objective is reached, everybody is safe and sound. If the objective isn't reached, Clelia and Sandro are eliminated (Sandro might fall while reaching out for Clelia).

Carte Blanche: The Confidant has the right, for crucial conflicts, to ask the players to change their objectives, or impose an objective of her choice. In most cases, she lets the players offer an objective. Or she submits them several possible objectives, in the perspective of making them see the range of possible outcomes.
<u>Multiple choice of objectives, example:</u> In this fight against the mantis-man, do you choose as an objective to kill him, wound him, humiliate him, win him over to your side or escape from him? Unless you have another idea?

She defines the counter-objective and the forfeit. She should be as menacing as possible.
<u>Setting the objective, example 1</u>: Objective: "Will you save from death this extra who's your friend?". Counter-objective: "Your friend dies." Forfeit: "Your friend makes it out alive but you lose his trust."
<u>Setting the objective, example 2:</u> "Will you survive this poison?". Counter-objective: "Your character is eliminated." Forfeit: "The poison wounds your for life."
<u>Forbidden objective, example</u>: "You kill the dragon" is a forbidden objective because the dragon is too powerful to be killed.

Alliances in a conflict

Once the objective is defined, **each inactive player can ally with the player in a simple conflict, or with either player in a duel or multiple conflict, or choose to remain neutral**. Alliances allow for the participation of a maximum of players in conflicts. **These alliances only last the time of the conflict**. During the next conflict, everything could change!

An alliance means the character lends out a hand to a character in conflict or that he intervenes from a distance, consciously or unconsciously, through the psychic thread of egregore.

† In exchange for her help, the allied player can ask for a redefinition of the objective and/or the counter-objective.
† A player can ally even if it is harmful for her character. She does so if she plays her character as being manipulated, reckless or masochistic, or if she emulates fate brought down on him through egregore.
† A player can ally with several sides or ally with her opponent, to show a dilemma of the character or an opposition between the objectives of the character and those of the player.



Using sentences in a conflict

Each player allied or in conflict examines her character sheet to see which sentence she can use in the conflict. **A sentence can be used when it constitutes a motivation, a resource or a handicap during the conflict**. A sentence made obsolete can be used if it refers to a memory of the character, motivating him in the conflict. The player can rewrite the sentence to bring it up to date in passing. However, **you can't use a sacrificed sentence**.

When a player uses a sentence, she takes a die from the pile. She says her sentence out loud. She explains how the story justifies her using this sentence, or says how her character acts in accordance with the sentence, or how he uses part of the sentence as a resource. If the player prefers a more internal, instinctive or visceral interpretation, she just takes the die and doesn't explain out loud to which sentences it corresponds.

If the player can't use a sentence but her character's participation to the conflict remains logical and interesting, she gets a free die.

A player who doesn't have a character in play can get involved in a conflict because she disagrees with a fact or because the conflict is about her character, whom she will have presented beforehand. She then immediately writes her creation sentence and takes a die linked to this sentence, or a free die.

A player stops taking dice when:
† She thinks she has enough (allies can continue taking some).
† She can't use any more sentences.
† Her side has the maximum of dice, which equals twelve divided by the number of sides.

Number of sides	Maximum dice
1 side (simple conflict)	12
2 sides (duel conflict)	6
3 sides	4
4 sides	3
5 or 6 sides	2
More than 6 sides	1

Players within a same side can each take a different number of dice. A side can go on taking dice even if the other side has stopped.

Using sentences, example: *Four characters in play: Parsifal (active), Lise, Ambrose and Clovis. Parsifal and Lise are fighting in a duel conflict to win the love of Queen Fern (an extra). Objective: Parsifal seduces Queen Fern. Counter-objective: Lise seduces Queen Fern. Parsifal uses his sentence* I love Queen Fern *(motivation), he takes a die. Lise uses her sentence* Roses grow on my blood *(resource) to offer Queen Fern a rose. Parsifal uses* My face is disfigured *(handicap): his ugliness will drive Queen Fern away or will move her. Ambrose says he allies with Lise, and uses* I'm at Lise's orders *(motivation). He'll spread gossips about Parsifal. Parsifal doesn't have any other sentences to use. He turns to Clovis, who had promised him an alliance, but Clovis backs away. Parsifal's side, therefore, can't take any more dice, but Lise's side carries on. Lise uses* I promised Parsifal not to hurt him *(obsolete sentence) because she's betraying this promise by competing against him (motivation). Lise and Ambrose don't want to use additional sentences. Clovis completes his betrayal by allying with Lise. He uses his sentence* Poems from centuries past echo in my head *(resource) to write a poem Lise will read to Queen Fern. Parsifal's side has taken two dice, Lise's side has taken four.*

Rolling dice in a conflict

Each player rolls her dice and they are regrouped by sides, to see if the conflict's objective is reached or not, and what positive or negative consequences the conflict will bring the characters.

Scores of 1 and 2 are called **dice of sacrifice**, scores of 3 to 10 are **dice of suffering**, scores of 11 and 12 are **dice of power**. These dice will be manipulated between the roll and the end of the conflict. You can remember which type each die is or put them on the corresponding boxes on the *Nanoflorenza* sheets.

If there is only one die of sacrifice in a side, it kills all the other dice from this side. They go back into the pile.
Dice of sacrifice, example 1: *Parsifal (two dice) against Lise (four dice). Parsifal gets 2 and 8: a die of sacrifice and a die of suffering. The die of suffering kills the other die. There's only one die of sacrifice left. In the other side, Lise gets 11 and 3: one die of power and one die of suffering. Ambrose gets 12: a die of power. Clovis, the traitor, gets a 4: a die of suffering. There's no sacrifice in Lise's side, so all dice are kept.*
Dice of sacrifice, example 2: *Anselma and Deathtorch are allied. Anselma rolls a die and gets a 9: a die of suffering. Deathtorch rolls two dice and gets 12 and 2: his die of power and Anselma's die of suffering go back into the pile.*

If there are several dice of sacrifice in a side, they contaminate all the other dice from this side, which become dice of sacrifice.
Dice of sacrifice, example 3: *Isaac and Bark, allies, both roll two dice. Isaac gets 1 and 7: a die of sacrifice and a die of suffering. Bark gets 2 and 12: a die of sacrifice and a die of power. Since there are several dice of sacrifice (the 1 and the 2), they contaminate all the other dice from this side. The die of suffering (7) and the die of power (12) are contaminated, and Isaac and Bark end up with two dice of sacrifice each.*

Defining who wins a conflict

If a side got dice of sacrifice or dice of power, it wins the conflict and reaches its objective.

If a side only got dice of suffering, it loses the conflict and doesn't reach its objective.

<u>Defining the winner in a simple conflict, example</u>: Isaac had "Kill the bear" as an objective. With four dice of sacrifice, he wins the conflict and thus kills the bear.

In case of a duel or multiple conflict:

† Advantage to the side with the most dice of sacrifice.
† If there are no dice of sacrifice, advantage to the side with the most dice of power.
† If there are no dice of power, advantage to the side with the most dice of suffering (a side can thus win by getting only dice of suffering: it's a painful victory).
† If there still isn't any clear winner at this point, the involved sides should describe a **compromise**: a situation in which each side partly reaches its objective and pays a heavy toll for it. If the sides fail to agree, it's a **status quo**: no objective is reached.
† After a status quo, players go to the rationing step and end the conflict by writing sentences: even a status quo is followed by an aftermath, through the writing of sentences. The turn can then be ended without a conflict or with a new conflict.

<u>Defining a winner in a duel conflict, example:</u> Parsifal got a die of sacrifice. Lise's side got two dice of power (and two dice of suffering). To decide between them, advantage to the side with the most dice of sacrifice. Parsifal thus wins the duel.
<u>Compromise and status quo, example:</u> Anselma, Deathtorch and Crucifix hold each other at gunpoint, a gun in each hand. Anselma wants to kill Deathtorch and Crucifix, Deathtorch wants to kill Anselma and protect Crucifix, Crucifix wants everybody to put down their weapons. Anselma gets three dice of sacrifice, Deathtorch also gets three, Crucifix gets a die of suffering. It's impossible to determine a winner. The three sides can agree on a compromise (a good choice would be the death of all three characters or Anselma and Crucifix's death) or a status quo (nobody dies for now, but physical or mental blows have been exchanged: with three dice of sacrifice each for Anselma and Deathtorch and a die of suffering for Crucifix, nobody gets out unscathed).

Who describes the outcome of a conflict

Depending on the dice's result, each leading player of a side says, from her character's point of view, how **he reaches or misses his objective**. She can bring up many details but the conflict will also have collateral consequences which will be told later, and maybe by others.

Who describes the outcome, example: *Parsifal's player describes how he reaches his objective. In this case, Parsifal seduces Queen Fern thanks to his sincere love, his moving ugliness, and by Lise and her allies's relentless fight against him. The Queen comes down from her pedestal and kisses him on his scars.*

Out of elegance, **if an objective is missed during a conflict, it means it's out of reach**, at least for the next go around the table.

> ***Carte Blanche***: When a player describes whether the objective is reached, the Confidant can rectify what she's saying depending on the logic or the mood she's trying to establish. If it's a crucial conflict, she can also describe its outcome herself.

Rationing dice of power and suffering in a conflict

Once it has been determined whether the objective is reached, **each player must ration her dice of power and suffering**. She can only keep one die of power and one die of power.

Dice of sacrifice are all kept.

If a player has both dice of power and dice of suffering, she can ignore the dice of suffering. She puts them back into the pile.

Rationing dice of power and suffering, example: *Isaac plays a simple conflict (objective: "Kill a Horla") with an ally, Bark. Isaac rolls four dice and Bark rolls two. Isaac gets two dice of suffering and two dice of power. He can only keep one of each. Bark gets two dice of suffering. She can only keep one.*
Ignoring dice of suffering, example: *...but Isaac prefers a clear victory. He thus keeps his die of power and puts his die of suffering back into the pile. Bark, having no die of power, is forced to keep her die of suffering.*



Circulating dice in a conflict

Dice symbolize the positive or negative consequences a conflict can bring a character. Each player can choose to keep all her dice of power, suffering or sacrifice. She can also give all or part of them to other players. She decides what she does depending on her tactic, the logic of events, and how she positions her character between hero, bastard and martyr. **When a player receives dice, she can refuse them** if she doesn't like them (dice of sacrifice and suffering are often undesirable). **With one exception: when a player in conflict gives dice to a player who allied with her, the latter is forced to accept them**. Lending a hand can bring rewards, but also collateral damage!

Circulating dice in a conflict, example: In the duel conflict to seduce Queen Fern, Parsifal got four dice of sacrifice. Parsifal's player wants to give dice of sacrifice to the others, but they are not his allies and can refuse this gift. And that's what they do! Parsifal thus keeps his four dice of sacrifice.
After rationing her dice, Lise's player finds herself with a die of power and a die of suffering. She keeps the die of power to refill her stock, but gives the die of suffering to Clovis, the traitor who hasn't won her respect. Clovis is forced to accept since he allied with Lise. Ambrose got a die of power, which he keeps for himself. Clovis got a die of suffering, added to the one Lise gave him.

Special cases:

† The player in conflict can give dice of power and suffering to a player with no character in play.
† A player can't keep more dice of sacrifice than she has unstruck sentences on her sheet. She can't give another player more dice of sacrifice than this player has unstruck sentences.
† If a player doesn't have a character in play, she must refuse the dice of sacrifice.
† If a player has already received a die of sacrifice, she must refuse the dice of suffering or power, because the harshness of dice of sacrifice mustn't be softened by the compensation of other dice.

Writing sentences in a conflict

Every player who has received dice will apply their effect on their character sheet, which means sacrificing sentences or writing new ones. It's a way of narrating the conflict's consequences. The logic of the adventure must thus be kept in mind, and players must accompany their

movement with the necessary narration to justify what they are writing. When a sentence is sacrificed or written because of a die, it describes how the objective is reached or not, but also the way the conflict happens (the means used to try and reach or counter the objective) and the whole range of sacrifices, rewards and unplanned collateral damages which affect the characters and their entourage.

It's a time of collective narration. When a player sacrifices a sentence or writes a new one, she describes what happens, to justify the text of this sentence, so everyone can see what the consequences of the conflict on the character are. The Confidant leads the negotiation about the conflict's consequences. In case there is a clear disagreement, each player has the last word on what she describes from her dice and it's not possible to start a second conflict to counter what she says. **But the player must keep in mind that what she's writing must intimately concern her character**.

For each die of sacrifice received, the player strikes out one of her sentences. It's important to keep a trace, which is why she must strike it instead of blacking it out or erasing it. It means the sentence isn't true, doesn't exist anymore. For complex sentences, at least one element of the sentence needs to be lost or become obsolete. It can be an object, a person, part of something, a feeling, a value, a belief... The player must say how it's linked to the conflict which just happened and how it is a loss or a sacrifice for her character. It's a total loss, reversible only with difficulty (to cancel a sacrifice should be the objective of a new conflict) which compromises the fulfillment of the character's objectives, or even their justification. **If all the character's sentences are sacrificed, the character is eliminated**.

For each die of power received, the player writes a sentence of power. The first sentence of power of the victorious side must describe how the objective is reached. Additional sentences of power describe the positive consequences of this victory. The sentence must show the advantages a character directly benefits from, in the form of a new motivation or a new resource, for instance.

For each die of suffering received, the player writes a sentence of suffering. If the player's side won the conflict, sentences of suffering describe the sacrifices leading to this victory, the collateral damage or unfavorable consequences stemming from it. If her side lost, the first sentence of suffering

describes how the objective wasn't reached and the next ones describe the unfavorable consequences of this failure. **The sentence must show the damages directly suffered by her character**, as a new physical, mental or moral handicap, or as a lost or damaged motivation or resource, for instance. She can't use a die of suffering to write that another character is suffering. However, if another character was described enduring a tragedy, she can write about how this event affects her character. She can say the suffering is applied to an extra (up to his death) as long as this extra was described as someone close and as long as his suffering affects her character, because he was attached to him or because he considered him a resource. It's hard to resorb a handicap linked to a sentence of suffering: this should be the objective of a new conflict.

If a player with no character in play receives dice of suffering or power, she immediately writes her creation sentence, then writes the sentences of power or suffering linked to the dice she received.

Writing sentences, example: *After the conflict between Parsifal and Lise, Parsifal has reached his objective: he has seduced Queen Fern. His player is the active one, he writes his sentences first. He happens to have four dice of sacrifice, so he sacrifices his four sentences. He's out! Parsifal's player describes how his character is so happy to have won Queen Fern's love... that he dies.*
Ambrose has gained one die of power. He rerolls the die and gets the theme of Love. Ambrose wants to write that his help, always renewed, made him win Lise's love. Since this concerns Lise, he asks her player for permission and she gives it to him. He writes My unconditional support paid off: Lise loves me.
Lise rerolls her die of power and gets the theme of Society. She says that Queen Fern wasn't seduced but that she acknowledges Lise's talents as a poet (she doesn't know the poem was dictated by Clovis). She writes I was named Great Poet of the Fern Kingdom. *She rerolls her die of suffering and gets the theme of Drives. Her defeat has wounded her pride. She writes* I'll use my role of Great Poet to get Queen Fern's esteem.
Clovis's player rerolls his two dice of suffering and gets the themes of Nature and Flesh. For his suffering of Nature, he describes how the most majestic Fern-Tree of the kingdom turned hideous when Lise told her poem. When poems of centuries past are freed, they devour the little positive egregore kept in plants. He writes Reciting the poems turns Fern Kingdom ugly. *The problem is that he knows Lise will ask him for new ones... For his suffering of Flesh, he writes* My betrayal's guilt gives me a stomachache.

If a player accepts dice while her character is eliminated or not yet created, she uses these dice to immediately create her first or new character (one creation sentence, as many sentences as the eliminated character had non-sacrificed sentences, and as many power and/or suffering sentences as dice received).

If a character has reached a total of twelve non-sacrificed sentences and thus fulfills his destiny, his player can keep on receiving dice, which will be immediately used to create a new character (one creation sentence and as many sentences as excess dice received).

Once a conflict is over, the active player can describe what happens. She should keep her description short and to a minimum because if the other players disagree with what she's saying, they can only negotiate within the fiction and not counter her say with a duel conflict. The active player has the last word on the narration but shouldn't exploit it. When she's finished, she announces the end of her turn.

Carte Blanche**:** The Confidant describes what happens around the character once the conflict is over, and announces the end of the turn.



PLAYING ADVICE: ADAGIO

Life is a play
whose roles have been badly dealt.

Playing heroes, bastards and martyrs in Milesvale's forest hell

There aren't any archetypal characters in *Inflorenza*. Examples, actual plays and the game's universe suggest roles, careers and passions that can drive the characters, but the player is free to choose. She just has to imagine a hero, a bastard or a martyr, a character who is involved in conflicts with strong objectives. Rich or poor, king or slave; a genius or an idiot; all that matters is that he has a motivating objective and a relation with the other characters. He can be an outstanding person right from the start or stand out during the game. Some characters are beyond the human condition: Gnomes spared by oblivion, Brothers born of a parallel prehistoric lineage, Corax torn between their human and crow natures, hosts of symbiotic Horlas, Horsanes with Horla blood or pure Horlas.

The player can decide from the start if her character will act as a hero, a bastard or a martyr; or she can choose during the game, depending on the circumstances. **The way the session unfolds, the consequences of the rules and the adventure will change the character**. In a way, it's the end of the session which will settle who he really was. The judgment on his behavior will be different from one player to another, and will also be different in the world of Milesvale, depending on how direct or indirect witnesses will tell his tale.

The game doesn't define what is a hero, a bastard or a martyr. The point is precisely for everyone to forge their own opinion. A session often ends with a debate on the behaviors of the characters: which ones were heroes, bastards or martyrs ? Which ones changed their position along the way?

Finally, players mustn't forget their characters live in Milesvale's forest hell and act accordingly. They will take a stance based on various extreme factors: the hostility of the forest, the existence of Horlas, oblivion, the future of human civilization, the struggle for survival. Each will have to determine whether life in the forest hell has a meaning.

Sacrificial heroism

Everything in Milesvale suffers from pain, and the characters are no exception. They have suffered, they are suffering and will suffer again. This is how the players will grow attached to them. These pains will redeem the most devious bastard, the most megalomaniac hero.

There are unintentional sufferings: the characters' failures, collateral damages of their victories, the physical and moral injuries inflicted by their opponents. There are also intentional sufferings: sacrifices. Using what is dear to us makes us stronger in battle. Losing what is dear to us allow us to overcome. The characters will face moral dilemmas: to get what they want, they will have to sacrifice their possessions, their loved ones, their emotional bonds, their values; maybe even their own life, stated as a conflict's objective or risked by being too intense during conflicts, since dice of sacrifice can kill you if you use up all your sentences. Depending on what the characters will choose to sacrifice, they will be heroes, bastards or martyrs.

When you get dice of sacrifice, you can accept a failure to develop a power which will allow future victories. Dice of sacrifice also allow you to win a conflict by sacrificing sentences. Pyrrhus, the Carthaginian general, won battles against the Romans at the cost of many soldiers' and elephants' lives. The heroes of *Inflorenza* win pyrrhic victories. Then they realize they have sacrificed more than they have won.

Sentences of suffering are another sacrificing mechanism. Writing sentences of suffering forces the player to describe the defeat and collateral damages endured by her character: the death of loved ones, the destruction of equipment, the questioning of her ideals... But at the same time, a sentence of suffering is a new resource for future conflicts. **In *Inflorenza*, if the hero loses an arm in battle, he becomes stronger**. These failures, these pains and these sacrifices punctuate the hero's story. They get him closer to death and victory at the same time, they humanize him while making a legend out of him.

Centering on the character

Inflorenza is not about the missions. There is no superior authority who will give the characters a task others could also carry out. In practice, if the characters sometimes serve a person, a faction or a cause, the focus is put on their individual objectives rather than on the success of a given mission. It's their stories and their feelings which are interesting, not the extras'.

The relations between the characters are more interesting that the relations between the characters and the extras.

How is this transcribed in the rules? First, try not to involve a character in a conflict unrelated to any of his sentences. For instance, the character cannot meet a wandering monster if this encounter doesn't serve a purpose in his story. It would if the character could at least use a sentence like *My sword is bloodthirsty*, *I don't believe in the existence of monsters* or *I protect my family against dangers*.

When you create a character, you have to write a sentence including the verb *to want*, in order to define a first objective for the character (*I want to find my father's murderer*) or the objective of other characters related to him (*A Horla wants to taste my organs*). This objective can be reached or become obsolete during the session, but the game will have created new personal objectives for the character by then. Creating a sentence related to the sentence of another character allows for a group dynamic, whether this relation is a common point, an alliance or an opposition. Here are some examples: *I am your father's murderer*, *The murderer also killed my parents* or *I want to help you find the murderer*.

Keep objectives and relations throughout the session!

Focusing on the story

The objective of a session of *Inflorenza* is to create a strong story. The game doesn't focus on overcoming obstacles or exploring a fictional universe in detail. This game can do both, but mostly encourages the common creation of a story with a strong dramatic aspect.

The players should keep some elements in mind if they want to respect this intention. They should endeavor to embody heroes, bastards or martyrs, or switch from one role to another; to stage the victories and losses of their characters; to stage the bonds of love or hate between their characters; to make sure their adventures feel like Milesvale's forest hell.

The rules provide tools for drama. The themes help you to deal with the problems specific to Milesvale. Because it's not advised to engage into a conflict unrelated to one of your sentences, each incident has meaning and serves the story. And every conflict creates consequences, often with nuances. Because you have to create objectives and relations between the characters, they appear as tragic heroes. Because the end of a session is decided one turn in advance, players know climax has been reached. It's now or never for their characters to give their best.

The players are also encouraged to be playwrights. They take decisions that go against the interests of their character if it serves an epic or tragic story. They offer strong objectives for conflicts and consequences just as strong. They progressively raise the stakes of objectives and consequences while also staging turns without conflicts so the fiction can breathe and coherence can be strengthened.

When they don't play, they listen to the active player and offer her ideas; but they respect the player's choices, even when they seem weak. No one came here to listen to the most gifted player tell the story in the others' place, even if it's a captivating story.

Epic horror

Monstrous Horlas, decadent humans, carnivorous wildlife. Milesvales' universe is a forest full of horror. However, the characters are not ordinary victims. *Inflorenza* offers horrific scenes and a horrific background but it is not a game of radical horror. If you want to explore Milesvale through this lens, use the Milesvale *Sourcebook* from the French RPG *Sombre*.

In *Inflorenza*, the characters face horror but they can be heroes, executioners or victims, or switch from one role to the other. You can play a Horla hunter as well as a Horla, or the prey of a Horla.

Another aspect of epic horror is that theaters are often spectacular, outrageous or cataclysmic. You can raise objectives at will: you will more often be confronted to a Horla god than to a simple Horla, take part in huge pitched battles rather than brawls in alleyways. The heroes of *Inflorenza* have lost everything. They have been through atrocities which made them almost invincible.

Horror remains present because the characters can die at any given time, if their death becomes the objective of a conflict or if they bet all their sentences in a conflict and get dice of sacrifice. Through sacrifices and sufferings, their loved ones can be dragged away from them on the roll of a dice. The themes of Madness, Hold, Egregore, Urges and Flesh move the fiction towards shady melodrama.

The most squalid miracles are possible as long as the characters and the players want them to happen. Your loved one can be resurrected and turned into a living dead if a sentence is about him and you set an appropriate conflict. By developing powers, you have access to forbidden knowledge. You get everything you ask for until you pay a high price for it in return. Every character signs Faustian pacts and the horror which haunts him in return is a hell made of his most personal demons.



Playing independent sessions

Because *Inflorenza* is a preparation-less RPG, in which you create your characters as you go along, it is very well-suited for independent sessions between one and four hours long. The rule about the end of the session allows you to keep track of time and reach a satisfying ending, no matter how long the session is.

Playing many independent sessions enables you to explore various aspects of the universe. You can change countries in each session, test different characters concepts, vary the mood from investigation to horror, pretend you're in a war movie or a melodrama.

Because the players define the content of their sentences and the objectives of conflicts by themselves, they decide of the rhythm of the fiction. They can unfold a long initiatory quest with only one die roll or detail it during hours. They can omit a boring part of the plot. This control of time allows for the development of a rich and coherent adventure in a single evening.

Playing an independent session allows you to experience horror, tragedy or epic events without any remorse. Because it seems less serious if the character dies, if the background is destroyed or if the plot is solved in less than two hours, players will have no remorse raising the stakes of objectives and produce fictions with the right tone for their game.

Playing an independent session allows you to get familiar with the game's intentions and rules. Players will hold more cards and will be able to define together which game style they want for their campaign, and prepare in advance theaters and characters matching their ambitions.

Players who like challenges can aim for objectives like “not die” or “have more sentences than the others at the end”. However, unless they play very fast, they won't have time to write twelve sentences and therefore will not reach their character's completion. For this objective, it's better to play a campaign.

Playing a campaign

Playing an independent session is an excellent way of discovering the game, but playing a campaign will give the characters more depth.

Technically, playing a campaign isn't different from playing an independent session. See it as a single session played over several evenings. There's only one special rule to apply: **at the beginning of a new session, blacken the character's sentences which have been sacrificed during the previous session**. A blackened sentence will not count as a sacrificed one if the character is eliminated and you have to create a new one.

The players will be better off if they prepare more than for an independent session. Before the first turn, they should create a theater, a campaign problematic, the style of their characters, the type of adventure which will be developed and the responsibilities of the Confidant.

Between each session, they can develop the theater, decide if any time goes by, if events happen.

Players can try to make the same character remain just under the completion threshold, or they can take pleasure in regularly changing characters, thanks to completion, elimination or a deal between players.

The end of the campaign can be established in the same way the end of a session is. It can also be linked to a number: how many characters reach completion, how many characters are eliminated, the fulfillment of a common objective or its irreversible failure.

A campaign will be a success if the players respect its problematic, progressively raise the objectives and their consequences, and maintain a less sustained rhythm than during an independent session. An independent session is paced like a tale, a campaign like a saga.



PLAYING ADVICE: MODERATO

We sell the poison and its antidote in the same flask.

Guide the players through their first session

In the actual play example *Your words don't reach me*, the Confidant explains the rules one by one. She lets the players learn the mechanics at the expanse of their characters. This allows them to absorb the rules at their own pace. This game has a learning curve: the players will refine their tactics and interpretation session after session.

If the Confidant wants to make sure the players are satisfied right from the first session, she can set more boundaries. Here are a few techniques:
† **Prepare the theater with the players.** This allows everyone to agree on the adventure's tone.
1 Baroque 2 Mysterious 3 Shamanic 4 Melodramatic
5 Dark 6 Diplomatic 7 Naturalistic 8 Mystical
9 Post-apocalyptic 10 Passioned 11 Heroic 12 Sensual
† **Make sure the objective of a character cannot be reached as soon as the first conflict**. If it is the case, make sure the player is OK with it. For instance, a player creates a character with the sentence *I want to kill the king* and chooses the king's death as the objective of her very first conflict. If the player wants to explore the consequences of this regicide, it's all good. If the player doesn't know what to do once the king is dead, she'd be better off engaging a conflict with an intermediary objective, like looking for allies or searching for the king's weaknesses to prepare the regicide.
† **Make sure the players are OK with the idea of not knowing everything about their own characters at the beginning**. In a typical session, some important details about one's character are left unknown at the start: his name, his appearance, his motivations. If a player creates a character without knowing these details, ask her if she really finds it interesting to spend the whole session exploring her character. If she seems lost, ask her questions about her character's name, his appearance, his motivations, his relation with the other characters. Once her character is individualized enough, the player will be more at ease to interpret him and have fun with him.
† **Help the players managing their sentences as resources**. For instance, advise them to play turns without a conflict, to be sure to add a sentence; avoid asking for too many dice rolls in a conflict to limit the risk of a multiple sacrifice.

Sentences: a character's history, motivations, relations, resources and hit points

The character sheet, because it is a succession of sentences, is only about what makes sense for the player or the character. The point of views changes from one sentence to the next, from one character to the other. A character sheet doesn't say everything about a character: it covers the essential bits, what makes a player interested in her character.

Sentences tell the character's history. Written one after the other, they transcribe the incidents, revelations and changes of the character and his story. *I vanquished a Horla. I lost the man I love.*

Sentences give you the character's motivations. *I'm looking for the Horlas who killed my parents*, *I'm a coward*, *I think Gnomes are after my sister* are sentences that can be used in future conflicts, as motivations or handicaps. *I'm a coward* can be used in a conflict where the character puts his life on the line, to prove he's not a coward! **Involving sentences represents the inner struggle of the character between what he wants, what he has to do, what he believes in, his illusions and his abilities.**

Starting with the character's creation, sentences will create links between the characters. These relations, positive and negative, will get stronger with alliances, dice circulation and duel conflicts. *This soldier saved my live*, *The Horla also killed Jehanne's parents*, *I will get revenge from this druid* are sentences which will feed the relations between the characters, and place them at the heart of the game.

Sentences are resources which give dice for conflicts, in the form of allies, equipment, skills, motivations... Turns without conflicts allow you to “restock” by writing an extra sentence for the next battle.

Sentences really are guiding themes for the Confidant, and not only for conflicts.

Finally, sentences are hit points! The players will realize that when they roll too many dice and get dice of sacrifice...

Defining the conflict and the objective

This game gives great importance to what a conflict is. In fact, its definition is redefined every turn. The simplest definition is as follows: A conflict is defined as a risk taken, which outcome is worth deciding with a die roll. If you had a session without conflicts, the adventure would have less surprises. To define a conflict is to inject randomness at a crucial intersection of the adventure; it allows you to put your character in danger.

It is important for conflicts to have meaning. Players don't roll the dice to negotiate the price of a beer in a tavern. Players roll dice when their characters face moral choices, their personal Nemesis, or death. However, conflicts are not action for action's sake: you can't define a conflict without any link to the character's sentences. If you want your character to fight a Horla, he needs to have a sentence like *My sword is bloodthirsty*, *I'm a Horla hunter* or *I ventured into the woods*. You can use an indirect sentence by adding meaning to it: *My wife has gone missing* could be used in such a conflict if you decide the Horla, to upset the character, takes on the face of his missing wife.

Conflicts are not simply action scenes. “I wonder if I'll have the guts to look at the severed head I hold in my hands”, “I wonder if there's a remote castle in this forest”, “Do I remember this night in the crypt?” are valid conflicts.

It is crucial to define the objective well. It must be limited to a single proposition. Dice circulation will nuance the conflict's outcome. If the conflict is “A dragon is attacking my brother and me”, the objective can be “I kill the dragon”, “I save my brother” or “I save my own life”. Depending on the chosen objective, successes and collateral damages will be very different. This is why multiple objectives are forbidden: “I kill the dragon while making sure my brother and I survive the fight” strips the character of any possibility of suffering, and Milesvale is a land of suffering.

Getting the best out of a conflict

Why a conflict is interesting

† **It offers uninformed choices**. When you choose to aim for an objective, you can't weigh all the possibilities of success and failure. It's a factor of suspense and credibility.
† **A duel conflict allows you to settle both the result of an action and the existence of a fact**. If the focus player says: “I'm the secret brother of your character” and the affected player disagrees, you can settle things through a duel.
† **Conflicts are verbal sparring matches.** During a social or even a physical fight, you want the characters to go all in with their dialogue. In this regard, players say the sentences they use out loud and support what they're saying by grabbing a die: “You cheated on me with this courtier!”, “My family has always helped you!”, “I told you a secret and you betrayed my trust”, etc. They can say uncomfortable truths or lie and manipulate. In the latter case, they can use a sentence and say the opposite out loud, for instance “I know you've always been faithful to me” while the sentence used is *You cheated on me with this courtier*.

When to get involved in a conflict?

† **“The ends justify the means”,** Machiavel.
† **When you feel the character is missing something.**
† **When the climax of suspense is reached.**
† **When the focus player decides the fiction cannot be resolved automatically.** If another player thinks the same, she can start a duel conflict with the focus player.
† **When a player wants to act before her turn, against the will of the focus player.** She then starts a duel conflict with the focus player or asks her to start a mass conflict.
† **When the focus player is out of ideas**. The Confidant can then draw inspiration from the sentences of the focus character to suggest a conflict.

Tips to get more dice

† **Finish your turn without a conflict**. To "restock" before upcoming conflicts, invent a motivation, an object or an ally and write a sentence about it.
† **Involve an obsolete sentence, contradicted by the fiction after it was written, in the conflict.** It becomes a past fact. To involve an obsolete sentence can express the character's change of attitude, like using *Leaf is my friend* in a fight with Leaf, after this friendship was broken.
† **Indirectly involve a sentence in the conflict.** Present it like "Chekhov's gun". At the beginning of Chekhov's play *The Seagull*, the presence of a rifle is mentioned; it will be used later to murder someone. You can use a sentence with seemingly no relation in a conflict if you state the relation will be revealed later. In this case, be honest and do create this relation later, if possible as soon as you write a new sentence.

Some fine details

† **Tell me what's happening to me!** A player can delegate her narrative power on the environment. She asks the Confidant to guide her towards her conflict's objective or even towards the writing of her sentences.
† **Failing in a conflict doesn't mean the character is incompetent.** Maybe he has given up on his plans, or deliberately failed?
† **You can lose a duel conflict and have sentences of power to write.** This begs the question: which unplanned benefit has this defeat given the character?
† **The elimination of a character can be linked to captivity or a disappearance**. Which gives the other players something to chew over.
† **You can ask for the death of several characters as an objective!**

What conflicts cannot solve

Some enemies (Horla gods) are immortal, some obstacles (Wall of Shame) are impassable. Accept it and don't suggest their destruction as a conflict's objective.

Dice of sacrifice

The heart of the game is writing sentences on a sheet of paper; sacrificing them means crossing them out. It is far from anecdotal.

Sentences are hit points. When the character has sacrificed them all, he's out. It can happen progressively, in groups of one or two sacrifices, or all at once if the character receives as many dice of sacrifice as his sentences.

During a conflict, the more dice you roll, the higher chance you have of getting several dice of sacrifice. And if there are several dice of sacrifice, they contaminate all the other dice. In other words, the more dice a player invests in a conflict, the more her character is in danger. This represents a heroic charge in which the character gives all he's got.

When a player rolls as many dice as she's got sentences, she risks getting eliminated. She goes all in and bets all she has in a last stand, to win the conflict, whatever the cost. She makes it or breaks it.

Isolated sacrifices have another role. More so than sufferings, they reflect the loss and sacrifices endured by the character. To sacrifice a sentence isn't only to exclude a fact from the character's motivations: to sacrifice a sentence creates a new fact, which is a loss or a sacrifice. If you sacrifice the sentence *I fight for the Queen's love*, it either means the character has stopped fighting, or that he doesn't love the Queen anymore, or that the Queen's love is forever out of reach... or that the Queen dies. If the character gets this sacrifice by destroying the Queen's castle, the Queen's death inside the castle is the most logical fact. And the most tragic, since it is by destroying this castle, a symbol of the Queen's imprisonment, that the character kills his beloved.

A positive interpretation of sacrifices is possible if you learn something, if emotion is there, if the fiction and the character remain coherent.

Dice of sacrifice are agents of tragedy. If sentences of suffering can turn out to be resources for future conflicts, sacrifices are clear and definitive losses. Without sacrifices, *Inflorenza* wouldn't fulfill the following intentions: playing heroes, bastards and martyrs, playing sacrificial heroism, playing epic horror.


Myrkkyä.

The tab

In *Inflorenza*, players enter a shop without any money in their pockets. They're told they can grab whatever they want in the aisles. It will simply be written on their tab.

Later in the session, the shop's managers come back to see the players and ask to be paid. But the players still don't have any money in their pockets. They will have to pay a high price, though.

What does this metaphor mean? The shop is all the objectives players can define and all the sentences they can write. Writing on their tab means there's no prerequisite on a character's resources for him to write a strong objective or sentence. A player plays a child; the child happens to be in the middle of a pitched battle; soldiers and horses are going to trample him. That's the conflict. The player sets "The child stops the troops with a single word" as an objective, and it's perfectly her right. By doing so, she instantly defines her character as having supernatural charisma and, if it wasn't already the case, the session becomes tainted with a sense of the wonderful.

Suppose the child wins the conflict and writes a sentence of power: *I stopped the troops with a single word.*

This sentence can come with sentences of suffering. Maybe the "single word" just killed the entire army (suffering of Society), including the child's father who was involved in the battle (suffering of Love). Maybe the troops did stop, but not in time. The "single word" was the child's cry under the horses' hoofs (suffering of Flesh).

This sentence can also lead to many conflicts. Generals may want to kill or capture a child capable of such a miracle. The child, once he is aware of his power, will be able to use it undiscerningly until the consequences are disastrous. He then might, during a fit of childish anger, ask his mother to kill herself and instantly regret it. Maybe the armies who were stopped were supposed to annihilate a Horla horde. **The tab must always be paid with a high price.**

Leaving gaps

This game's creative freedom may lead you to believe you have to predict and control as much of your character's story as possible. It can be exhilarating, or reassure you about the control you have on your character. It can also be daunting, or forbid any surprise. To avoid these pitfalls and let the session breathe, it's advised to leave gaps.

You write only one sentence when you create your character, in order to discover more about him along the way: his temper, appearance, name, gender, powers, motivations... These aspects of the character can wait to be described, and might be so by another player.

Switching narration from one player to the next will also bring its share of surprises. Whether you have a little or a lot of imagination, it's interesting to end your turn on a cliffhanger, an unresolved action. The sentences that have just been written have brought details, but haven't revealed the whole picture.

A character is eliminated. Is it necessary to immediately say what happened to him?

A character loses a conflict against a monster. Do you have to immediately explain what this monster was? It will be up to the next focus player to bring the answer. Maybe. Leaving things with no immediate explanation is a good way to handle supernatural and magical realistic elements.

And if you prepare a theater in advance, it must have gaps. Unexplained facts, unresolved plots, waiting for the players to solve them. There are many ways to create suspense; but here, the most efficient is leaving gaps.

Temporality

How does time pass? As the players wish. Narrations and conflicts are what describe the flow of time. It is, as in any story, elastic time. “Ten years pass by”, “I see my blood flowing, second after second”, “Remember, it happened a long time ago” are all valid propositions.

Players describe what their characters do in the present tense. Time slows down when you play a conflict, because the players think about the conflict's definition and objective, talk, roll the dice, spend a few minutes writing down sentences. Not only is time slowing down, it's also multiplying: by defining the objective, players imagine what would happen if the conflict was won, what would happen if it was lost. When you write down sentences, the conflict's outcome is still negotiated. For one moment, you glimpse the tree of possibilities. When you end a turn without a conflict, you go back in time and reveal the character's past.

Ellipses like “Ten years pass by” or “He crosses the sea” mostly happen at the beginning and end of a turn; also during the definition of a conflict: “My troops gather at the foot of the fortress and begin the siege. The objective is to know whether I manage to get face to face with the baron, my rival”. It's implied that this conflict quickly glosses over the troops moving and the bloody siege with hundreds of protagonists. What the player is interested in are not the details of the battle or to know if the siege lasts one hour or three months; it's to know whether her character will get face to face with the baron, his rival.

Time is also a means of transportation. It brings the players as fast as possible towards the events they're interested in. The focus player controls the flow of time, but other players can make suggestions: “When you'll have reached the baron, the session will be over. I'd rather spend a little time on the siege itself” or “I would find it a shame that you don't face the baron. Let's say you've already reached him and let's play a conflict which objective will be to kill him”. Or even counter the flow of time by asking for a duel conflict: “Before you can face the baron, I get in your way”.



PLAYING ADVICE: ALLEGRO

Guerilla in excelsis deo

Who controls the story? (Red Card)

When you play in Red Card mode, each player controls a character and the part of the story directly related to this character.

The Confidant's role is to make sure the story's global coherence is preserved, Milesvale's aesthetic canon is respected and relations are created between the players, but she is less a master than a counselor. The focus player always has the last word on what happens before a conflict, on the definition of conflicts and objectives, and on the writing of her sentences.

Each player has great creative freedom, centered on their character. This freedom stops where the others' begins. Milesvale is a tough universe where cruelty is often the punchline. Sharing the narration can become a struggle, which illustrates the character's will clashing with the external world.

This creative freedom can be exhilarating or daunting. If a player is very at ease with the idea of creating the story around her character, she will also want to advise the others a lot. She should rather put her enthusiasm at the service of the group, without crushing the creativity of more shy players. In other words, she should invest her good ideas in her character, in his relations with other characters, in the interest of the story. Give advice to others only if they seem to run out of ideas, and accept their refusals.

If a player is less at ease to create the story around her character, she should feel excused from producing a perfect story all by herself! The adventure's quality depends on the sum of what all players suggest. Players must first and foremost explore the themes and ideas they like, and which the others like. They can settle for brief or incomplete narratives, because they will create mystery around the character, drive the others to be interested in him, and leave space for their own characters. Finally, a player who is out of ideas can always ask the others about what her character might do and what might happen to him.

The Confidant's role (Red Card)

The Confidant is not like the other players. **All players should respect the rules and make sure everyone is having fun; the Confidant is consolidating the session.** In this regard, she has multiple functions: organizer, rules specialist, producer, stage director, playwright, storyteller. At the beginning of the session, she talks with the other players about the importance of each role. All of those can go away when the players get more experienced and are more cohesive together. After a few sessions, playing without a Confidant will become possible. Some groups will, at the contrary, prefer to give her more and more power with each session.

† **Organizer.** The Confidant makes sure that everyone speaks for the same amount of time, that the ideas of the most shy persons are used, and that the most enthusiastic don't crush the others.

† **Rules specialist.** The Confidant knows the rules like the back of her hand. She teaches them to the others, and makes sure they are respected.

† **Producer.** The Confidant transmits Milesvale's universe to the players. She also makes sure their aesthetic propositions are coherent with each other and with the aesthetic defined together at the beginning of the session.

† **Stage director.** Because each player controls the story around their character, it's possible that ideas are plentiful and not very coherent with each other. The Confidant makes sure coherence is there, through her character or through narration advice.

† **Playwright.** The Confidant makes sure the adventure being created is about heroes, bastards and martyrs in Milesvale's forest hell. She makes sure players raise the stakes of the objectives and their consequences, not too slowly nor too fast (see article *Temporality* p. 69). She tries to drive the characters and the players into a corner.

† **Storyteller.** If she asks for and gets the others' explicit approval, the Confidant can enliven the story from time to time by taking over narration and sentence writing, like in *Carte Blanche* mode.

How to build a story together (Red Card)

Always say yes.

It's not easy to control a story together with other players. You control what relates to your character, but the others' sphere of influence is never clearly delineated. The best compromise is to follow a rule from improv theater: always say “yes”. Or, more precisely, always say “yes, and...”.

When the focus player invents a fictional element, try to accept it as real and important. You have technical means to refuse an element's existence, by asking for a duel conflict or simply by talking it out with the player: don't overdo it. Try as much as possible to accept the narrative propositions of the focus player, now and during the whole session. Even better: use them yourself with “yes and...” or “yes but...” propositions. “Yes, you killed this bandit, and I find some loot under his horse”. “Yes, you killed this bandit, but his gang will now hound us”. Show the others that the elements they added to the fiction are important to you. Use them to create even more positive or negative relations between your characters.

Take breaks.

Between each turn or after everyone has had a turn, talk with the others. Is the fiction headed in an interesting way? Are the events succeeding at an enjoyable pace? Are there details we forgot to develop? Do some facts need to be explained in more detail? Are we sure we're telling an adventure shared by all the characters and not a mosaic of personal stories with no relation to each other? Do we share the same idea of Milesvale's forest hell? And, most of all, are we enjoying this adventure?

Let go

Never feel you're forced to tell a good story.
You're not telling it, you're living it.

Who plays the extras? (Red Card)

The focus player is supposed to play the extras. Some even play the extras more than their own character, even when writing down sentences. However, as long as the focus player agrees, any other player can bring her own contribution to the narration. The Confidant can ask for the permission to play extras. This will strengthen the illusion of coherence and reassure players who are less at ease with too large a creative freedom.

Meta-character

Instead of playing a humanoid character, the Confidant can choose to play an abstract character. It can be a mythological entity (Shub-Niggurath), a group of opponents (the Horla conspiracy, the Dark Lodge...), a place (the forest, the city...), a phenomenon (mold), an allegory (Fate, Death...), the theater (The Camino de Santiago) or even the entire Milesvale universe! It changes nothing in terms of rules: she plays turns for her meta-character, writes sentences and takes part in conflicts.

Some subtleties for playing a campaign

† **Make the players and the characters understand they have the means to change the world.** For better or for worse. Their involvement will be strengthened by this understanding.
† **The Confidant can play a different character every session**. This way, she can adapt the campaign's tone and interact better with the other characters.
† **End each session by choosing the objective of the last conflict, without using sentences and dice rolls.** A perfect cliffhanger! Write down the name of the focus player as well as the conflict's objective, and start there next time.



The line (Red Card)

When you play in Red Card mode, you can sometimes be led to define a conflict yourself and immediately solve it. You can be led to make up your own character's adversity, to control a lot of details about the environment surrounding your character. **Those are things that can go over the line.** The line is the limit of what a player wants to control around her character. It varies for each person.

A session's quality is linked to the players' creative efforts. If they don't make any, it is highly likely that you won't be playing the same game, or that the enjoyment you derive from the game will be very small. The Confidant's authority will allow her to catch up with one or two players who are totally lost; changing the base rules and some other exercises in style will catch up with a few more, but drive the session away from what was initially envisioned for this game.

You have to understand why, when you apply the Red Card mode to the letter, it oversteps the line of some players, for very legitimate reasons. Some don't like to imagine their own adversity and solve it immediately afterwards. They think there's no challenge in this, no surprise, no pleasure. Dice and the other players will bring uncertainty, but it's not enough for them. Other players don't like to imagine the environment surrounding their character. They prefer to explore the fictional environment and for this, they need someone else to imagine it for them. As for the last category, they agree to use their creative freedom but it's the sum of the constraints (writing and sacrificing sentences, themes, relations with the other characters, a game centered on the story) which, in the end, disconcert them.

Once the Confidant has identified these fears in certain players, she will be able to offer them the following deal: during these players' turns, she will take narration over. She will describe the environment and the adversity, play the extras. She will leave these focus players imagine the conflict but will decide what the objective is, or vice versa. She will offer multiple choice propositions when the time to write sentences comes, or even write them herself. This way, the Confidant will be able to move the line according to the players.

The Confidant is responsible of coherence (Red Card)

When the players control the story in turns and the Confidant only explains the rules, the session can lack coherence. Players will use their freedom to ignore or deny what happened before their turn and will try to outbid each other. Here is what will then happen:

† **One-upmanship in the description of Horlas.** The Horlas described will be more and more baroque and disconnected from what happened before. At the same time, the character's mutations will make them more and more powerful and inhuman.

† **Narrative incoherence.** The elements of the adventure that were introduced at the beginning of the session are never explained or ended. During every turn, players bring new revelations, always more dramatic and unbelievable. The stories of the characters don't end, and when they do, it's through a very brutal mass conflict at the end of the session and a series of violent deaths. The adventure will seem absurd and illogical.

† **Unusual rhythm.** Players never go into conflicts, or at the contrary, they start conflicts all the time, for any reason. Action seems stuck or frenzied.

If the Confidant recognizes these problems, she can first ask the players if these are really problems for them. If they do want to avoid Horla outbidding, narrative incoherence and unusual rhythm, here's what the Confidant can do.

† **Recycle the supernatural elements previously introduced.** When a player is about to describe a Horla or a supernatural phenomenon, the Confidant can offer her to recycle previous details. For instance, if a White Lady was seen in the forest at the beginning of the session, this monstrous Horla now appearing may be a dreadful witch dressed in white.

† **Ask questions about unsolved mysteries.** The Confidant will keep a mental list of these mysteries. She will frequently asks the players about these and offer to link the mysteries between each other. Wouldn't the murderer of those young men be Rufus's violent father? If Cornell forgets everything, could it be linked to the oblivion power of Ms. Sobbing?

† **Make sure the players alternate turns with and without conflicts.** When a player is unsure or feels out of sentences, it's better she plays without a conflict. However, if she's had enough, a conflict is overdue!

Confidant's techniques (Red Card)

Once the Confidant feels experienced and if the players feel they still need it, she can use some advanced techniques.

Narration

When she's a newcomer and confronted to an uncertain player, the Confidant will have a tendency to offer concrete narrative ideas and conflicts. Subsequently, she should first ask questions, to create ideas in the player's mind.
“Your main objective is to kill Mercutio, but will you undertake it now, or go about your daily life?”
“How will you kill Mercutio? Where will you begin? Will you look for allies, get some equipment, spy on him? Where?”
“Who's against your project? Who could get in your way? Are you sure Mercutio is the man to kill?”
Then, if it doesn't lead anywhere, offer multiple choices. Don't offer single solutions.
“You could get into Mercutio's palazzio, or solve common business first. You wrote the sentence *I am a shipowner envied for his success.* Let's say some of your fleet's ships have been sabotaged...”
“Wouldn't Mercutio have friends who'd like to challenge you to a duel? At the contrary, Mercutio certainly has enemies you might contact. A rejected lover, a jealous noble, a business competitor? Unless you prefer to hide in Mercutio's palazzio. Will you go into a conflict to know if you get discovered or to know if you uncover clues? Or would you rather play it cool for now, end your turn without a conflict and write a new sentence which will describe what you saw in the palazzio?”

The Confidant should curb her enthusiastic suggestions and leave some room to the player, but also avoid to always ask the players to raise the stakes higher, faster, stronger, to respect her own rhythm.

The Confidant makes sure the esthetic canon is respected but shouldn't make her vision of Milesvale's universe sacred. If the players decide trees are made of glass, no problem! The best attitude is to validate that, and add coherent details: crystal lumberjacks, mirror-rivers or sharp-edged leaves falling to the ground.



PLAYING ADVICE: VIVACISSIMO

If you don't become the machine,
the machine will become yourself.

The Confidant, keeper of mystery

Not knowing everything. Not controlling everything. Discovering the coherence of elements rather than building it ourself. If the group prefers playing this way, they can ask to play in *Carte Blanche* mode. They can also give the Confidant the following prerogatives, with or without *Carte Blanche*:

† The Confidant doesn't play a character. She remains neutral and focuses on facilitation, staging and arbitration. This manner of proceeding is even more efficient when there are many players.

† Between two sessions of a campaign and when players ask for it, she can offer individual sessions or sessions with a limited number of players, to clarify some elements. At the beginning of these transitional sessions, players blacken their sacrificed sentences. If they develop a new power during the inter-session, they won't be able to develop another power for this character during the group's next session.

† During a campaign based on tensions between the characters, players can play with their sheets hidden. Only the Confidant can read their sentences. It's even better if you have a screen for each player. When a player uses sentences, she puts the dice on them, without reading them out loud. The Confidant looks behind the screen and agrees on their use.

† Players can ask to play their turn as an aside with the Confidant. She then will be the only one to know what's going on. She will have to make sure facts will have consequences on the fiction, which she will stage later in the session.

Other ways of playing

Number of players

† **It's possible to play alone.** You just have to create several characters. The sessions *Your words don't affect me* was played in solo.
† **For large tables, you can divide the group.** Groups can exchange players (and their characters) between two turns.
† **Play as open tables.** Any player can join the group at any moment. She sits at the table two chairs after the focus player, to watch the game before creating her character. She can leave the table at any moment, putting her character between brackets or giving him to another player.

Disrupt *Inflorenza*

† **Delete the theme table.** Writing sentences is now unbound from constraints.
† **Play turns out of order**. Break the rotation mechanic of the game and replace it with a more intuitive passing of the torch, more linked to the fiction and to everyone's inspiration. **Every player has three turn tokens.** At the end of a turn, anyone can spend a token to play the next turn. If several players want to spend their token at the same time, some can abstain. Those that resist don't play a real turn, but a conflict in which they must all be involved, as players in conflict, allied players or players in a duel. When everyone has spent their three tokens, everyone is dealt three again.

Design of character sheets

Players can write their sentences around a drawing: a tree, a spider, a flower, a coat of arms, a spray of fire, a maze, gears, snakes... Print pictures evoking the character, his friends or his resources, take notes, manage relational diagrams... All of this makes the game and the characters more alive.

Death is not a definitive end

If he loses a conflict which objective was his death, the character becomes a living dead.



THEMES

I am the lily and the gold,
I am the river
that never goes asleep.

Madness

A psychic thread, the sum of all of humankind's hauntings, egregore lays a screed of madness upon the whole of Milesvale. No one is really insane. No one is reasonable or measured anymore.

People get deeper into the forest to escape from hallucinations. Ships of fools glide along rivers, packed with insane singers. In his underground lair, covered by a burqa full of sequins, the King in Yellow contemplates the insanity possessing people. In the cities of Milesvale, the precious Yellow Opium is exchanged. Drug addicts pay with everything they have left, they give everything that is precious to them for one last vision. In the forests, nomads chew on the Black Meat, a disgusting and spongy substance shat by the earth. In a trance, they get in touch with Mythological Entities of this primordial hell.

Society itself has lost its mind. Pragmatic morality and degradation of the social structures. States dictate absurd laws, apply barbaric punishments. No moral is legitimate, no legitimacy is definitive.

Submitted to the laws of nature and savagery, everyone lives in fear. Even the heroes are afraid. Afraid of a world that wants them dead, afraid of other people. But first and foremost, afraid of themselves. Afraid of the atrocities they might commit.

Nights are paved with burlesque nightmares. Mind parasites burrow into the cortex of sleeping bivouackers. Ragged prophets crawl through city streets and speak in tongues. Tyrants and saints make fear reign with their divine words.

A woman bends over and screams. She's possessed. A man runs away from white spiders, the creeping cyst-spiders which bite inoculates despair, phobias. A sage jumps from a cliff to escape this valley of tears. Lucidity.



Memory

Oblivion strikes most of Milesvale's inhabitants. This hereditary disorder affects emotional (or episodic) memory. People record the memory of events during only three years. Expertise memory (semantic and procedural memory) is not concerned. Beyond three years of memories, it's the memory deadzone. A fog of amnesia and doubts. Everyone is an orphan from their own story. Sometimes, a memory violently comes back, in all its details. It's a flash-back, a corpse from the past resurfacing.

This amnesia causes great pain and destroys morality. Seers offer to read your past in tarot cards. Strangers knock at your door and say they're the brother and sister you've forgotten. Mistakes, lies and truths taste the same. The uncanny familiarity of déjà-vu.

You believe, you testify. Long riggings of conjectures stretched on soft objects. The links between people tarnish, fade, get tangled. Your child may as well be your worst enemy.

Tragic pasts, made of deaths and regrets. You keep a taste of blood in your mouth from the past, but don't know whose it is. Revenges are enacted, vendettas against imaginary culprits. A mockery of an objective. Chimeras wholeheartedly believed. Memory is like a glass house on sandy ground: a simple bump can break it. The unconscious. And waking up, in the middle of the road, with total amnesia.

"Winners write History. But they didn't write squat!" says the proverb. Milesvale's past is a land cleared by archeologists, mystics and reckless people.

The world belongs to those who have memory or reinvent it. Writers and forgers of private journals. Mythomaniac and impostors. Counterfeit Gnomes with no after-effect from the Syndrome. The world belongs to the Creatures. Brothers of the Golden Masks with superior intelligence, Corax practicing genealomnesy, each one receiving the memory of all his ancestors. And the Horlas. Serene. Conscious of the eternity they carry, which makes them the strongest of all.

Nature

As far as the eyes can see. The forest. Inextricable. Colonies of trees, ferns. Seas of black humus, layers of mold and a proliferation of insects. Shrubs, mushrooms, darkness. The struggle of foliage for light. Under all of this, man. A prey amongst others.

This nature abhors a vacuum. Titanic trees, each one a pandemonium of bark, fissures, incarnate creatures. Ecosystems. Overabundance. Expanding vegetal chimeras. Elastic beings moldering under ponds. Fishes in brackish water, hydras, jaws, flabby terror.

Animals. Prehistoric mammals, swarming things eluding from the logic of natural history. In the lumpy and toxic sky, birds hide to rot. Bats. Skeletons of beasts gnawed by centipedes and maggots. Larvae and parasites drill, jab, suck flesh, carry diseases. Gangrene, plague, havoc. Making their own forest out of human organs. Eyes, livers, viscus, brains are their cradle. The whole forest is growing on a charnel of dead things. Ruins, necrosis, rot.

Man wants to survive at any price. Even if it means becoming a beast. A predator amongst others. Fighting for water, food, heat, vital space. Fighting for your desires and die out of necessity. Food chain.

Journeys. Survival journeys, initiatory journeys. Migration. Nomadism. Mystical exploration. Forest is always a passage. Forgotten paths. Pilgrims roads. The grey and concrete mass of the Fallen Ways crossing through the country.

The forest never really stops. Cities, riddled with trees and climbing plants. Mountains, green architectures. And when it stops, there are other natural hells. Seas full of seaweed and monsters. Salty deserts, full of lead, the domain of demons. Nature, everywhere, always, prevails over those who thought they could conquer it.

Hold

"I am the worm and I am the flesh
I am the skin and I am the bones
I am the new manna and the old rot"

Crouching in Milesvale's underground humus, Shub-Niggurath. The Black Goat with a Thousand Young. Lung of the forest, supreme mythological entity, master of fertility. Black bubo, infinite protoplasm, teeth, hoofs, horns. A billion black and greedy eyes. Billions of mutagen corpuscles coming from him and feeding him. Hold. It made this hell that grows and rots with immoderate speed.

Horlas. These monstrosities at the back of the woods. Hideous and misshapen humans. Horsanes, the coupling of a human and a Horla. Animals carrying stain. Perversion of mores and ecosystems.

Degenerescence. No life form has kept its genetic purity. The most beautiful fauna and flora eventually change. Bastardizations, hybridizations. Bodies, split, sprawling, twisted organisms.

Humans become animals again. Some have lost their language. Others are already changing into beasts. Lycanthropes. Corax. They talk with beasts in the putrid language, the mother of all tongues, a language of gurgling that all throats can speak.

Carrying corrupting spores, Sow Mothers. Sucking their dilated breasts, picklets, blind and grey amoebas, the offspring and food of endlessly snickering Sow Mothers.

Epidemics. Germs that spread from animals to men. Waves of mutations. Boils, hair, scab. Blemishing of skins and bones. Vermin in the humus, vermin in granaries, vermin in brains.

Hold bastardizes bodies as well as minds. Orgies. Cannibalism. Consanguinity. Gangrene affects society. Social corruption. Decadence. The end of times is a putrid horn of plenty.

Egregore

Shub-Niggurath's essence, which spreads through and defines Milesvale, is both a corpuscle and a wave. Hold is the corpuscle and egregore is the wave.

Egregore is a psychic texture on which are soaked all of humankind's hauntings. Human psyche has fed and made egregore, in the same way egregore feeds and shapes all things in Milesvale, first and foremost Horlas and sorcery. Egregore has existed since the dawn of time, but it's particularly concentrated in Milesvale.

It is both the material and the energy of sorcery. Any sorcerer's ritual aims to manipulate egregore. But egregore also manipulates the sorcerer. The more the sorcerer believes in the power of his magic and lets it control him, the more successful it will be. Egregore also gives birth and shapes Horlas, who can then put on the appearance of legendary beings. It accumulates in haunted places, areas where massacres, battles, legendary or religious feats happened. In these places, anything can happen. Mostly the worst. Because Milesvale's egregore is nefarious. It's a psychic remanence of the cataclysm and war which gave birth to it. It's the very expression of the slyness of the Black Goat with a Thousand Young. When highly concentrated, it grinds the reason of the strongest.

Specters, Mythological Entities, supernatural events, all are deeply linked to egregore. Its omnipresence soaks Milesvale with magical realism. A legion of facts worthy of fairytales are accepted as true, without any surprise. The forest is invaded with horrific and wonderful things. Horlas take on the appearance of knights, ogres, dragons. Dead people blend with the living.

Feeling strong emotions connects you to egregore. Here, you can die out of love, shame or anger. Out of sorrow, fear or loneliness. The characters are so full of egregore that for them, anything's possible. They are linked by extreme fates. The condition of hero, bastard or martyr is in their blood. These tragic figures of the forest hell hide this psychic power, aggregated for centuries and centuries, the fuel that makes them capable of prowesses and atrocities.

Society

Wild communities lost in the forest or big cities of steel and stone fighting against nature. Men have survived and are slowly rebuilding civilization.

All moral codes need to be reinvented. Revolutions happen in big cities, but they mostly go through setbacks. Oligarchies and tyrannies, the supremacy of millenarian pseudo-religions, brutal laws. Feudality. Cities are dirty and swarming, villages are enclaves of fear. From osts of knights to resistance fighters taking weapons, war rages.

But civilization is also synonymous with hope. Commerce, voyages, technological rediscoveries. Philosophy questions its environment and reinvents a culture in tune with the green hell that surrounds it.

However, even within the most controlled capitals, anarchy reigns. The law of the strongest and of retaliation. Fierce and insane customs, pragmatic morality, oblivion and loss of bearings. Feudal authority only has a real hold on a few fiefdoms, drowned in the forest. In the wild nature, there's no State, no police, no currency. Only the fear of your neighbor. Skinners and remorseless bandits hold the maquis.

Heroes, bastards and martyrs have everything to reinvent in this green hell turned land of possibility. They are its masters and its slaves. They are courtiers and rebels. They are kings and pirates. It's up to them to guide humankind or lead it to disaster.

... When they're not beyond human condition. Gnomes, keepers of memory, persecuted for it. Brothers of the Golden Masks infiltrated in all layers of society. Corax torn between their soul of man and their soul of crow. Horlas, monstrous heralds of the new flesh.

They are the facets of this tortured society, this society which is anarchy constantly rising up and falling down. Unless they are from elsewhere, Humans from this Outside world cursed and unknown, beyond the barriers of the Wall of Shame, from the ocean or outer space.

Clan

Within the forest hell, whether you're a nomad lost in the woods or a schemer at the king's court, survival is law. And since it's hard to survive alone, almost everyone belongs to a clan.

Whether it means family, friends or one's tribe, the clan is a strong support, a terrible constraint. You have promised to not let anyone down but they've planned to sacrifice you for the common cause.

The clan's law overrules the city's law. It's necessary and tenacious. Whether it's the law of a father terrorizing his children with his belt, or the law of a secret society looking over its members' safety. The clan is a complex canvas of alliances and debts, promises and duties. The clan's ties are as strong as ties of love or vengeance. They often are ties of love and vengeance. Ties of blood. Blood pacts.

The clan can be just a small cell, but there are ramified organizations. Corporatists guilds, factions in a perpetual war, paramilitary phalanxes. The Watchmen Caste, a secret society vowing to fight against the Horlas. The Sarcomants, troubling shapers of flesh.

Not all clans are open to humans. Within the Lodges, the Brothers of Golden Masks prepare their supremacy. The Lines, a genealogical reference, link the Brothers to famous ancestors and define guidelines parallel to the Lodges. Meanwhile, the Corax Ways draw up the complex philosophical tangles of the crow-men.

Some Horlas have affinities with humans. They infiltrate, corrupt, seduce and manipulate them. They infiltrate sects like the Mano Senestra, insinuated in all the layers of society in Al-Andaluz.

The characters, heroes, bastards and martyrs of their time, are both hostages from their ancient pacts and founders of new clans.

Religion

Earth has turned into hell and everyone questions this fact. Oblivion and the fall of civilization have made the memory of the divine disappear in the heart of many. For them, there is no God who could have wanted this hell. Life in Milesvale is meaningless.

For many others, at the contrary, the divine is everywhere. The forest, its fauna and its flora have a will. Every tree, every raised stone, every leaf can be an animist god. It's also the vision of druidism. Celebrating the charitable nature, white druidism. Venerating the Horlas as keepers of its secrets, black druidism.

The four big religions of the Book also experience a new rise. Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism have reappeared with a millenarian approach. Egregore allows believers to accomplish miracles of faith. Sometimes redeeming, sometimes hermetic, sometimes belligerent, the religions of the Book have started a great conquest of lost souls. They are often perverted into millenarian heresies, sometimes abject, always strange. Lazareans resurrecting the dead in the name of Jesus, Expiatists bringing the Last Judgment forward, Disciples of Khlyst looking for God in sin, Sheitanists corrupting the message of the Quran. These heresies spread through entire nations, carried by messiahs of a new era. Or they are only ramblings cut from the world, within visionary microcommunities.

Thus new religions appear. Or others rise from their ashes. Adoration of Moloch-Baal in Carthage, veneration of Irminsul the Tree-God in Saxe.

When egregore and the supernatural are always present, when the secret of the origins gnaws at the mind of the most insane, when you need to find meaning to living in hell, religion always has a word to say.

And in the deeps of the forest and the earth, Shub-Niggurath, the father and mother of all, keeps eternally silent and without any message for humankind, not even for the Horlas.

Science

Milesvale is not strictly a medieval world. We're on the ruins of Europe. In this post-apocalyptic era, there are many remains and relics of times past. The remains of the Golden Age are damaged by time, unrecognizable, buried, corroded, broken, twisted.

The characters walk through the rubbles of houses, cities and the splendors of the ancient age, covered by the forest or reorganized by new inhabitants. They drive in cross-country vehicles, hoping not to run out of fuel in hostile territory or in the middle of the Fallen Ways, miles from any civilization. They defend their camp with the last shells of an antique shotgun.

They fight for the least wonder from the past. Common relics, useless trinkets, unusable smartphones, weird clothes. Wonderful relics, all sorts of machines still working and working miracles.

They make new discoveries. Endemic technology, Milesvale's weird science. Orgone accumulators, kabbalistic automatons, calculators full of cogs, golems, serums of cellular memory. Alchemy, the science of all sciences, transmutations, decoctions.

Outside is the future. Beyond the Wall of Shame, run through by electromagnetic shivers, the Outside and its miraculous artifacts. Neuronal implants, furtive drones, high-tech weapons.

Just like the forest covers all human things, obscurantism covers all progress. Illiterate priests burn rare books. Artisans build crooked furniture with archaic tools. For one living-room lavishly decorated with the most beautiful paintings of its contemporaries, a multitude of burrows full of blackened men eating roots who barely know a few words. Will the people, who has forgotten its history, one day be able to reinvent one?

Love

Egregore intensifies all emotions. Milesvale's inhabitants are hypersensitive and hyperfurious. Love is their language. A love that feeds everything, a tragic, unreasonable love for beings, things, ideas. A love that doesn't know its name, that kisses with force and embraces with violence. Here, love can kill. And that's precisely what it does, everyday.

Milesvale's heroes, bastards and martyrs are victims of their desires. They can fall into the blackest passion with a single look. A kiss for them is a blood pact. To make love is an act of faith, a spit of life in the face of hell. This love blows away any other value and any hierarchy. This love will give them strength enough to make the gods tremble. This love will put them at rock bottom, powerless. It will always end up killing them. Filling their veins until their blood boils. Or leaving their bodies until they dry up and breathe their last breath.

Of course, hate walks by its side. Its siamese twin. It's hard to know the difference between the two:< you take your fists out to stroke, you stick a dagger in a beloved skin, you kill to say “I love you”.

Love is not necessarily carnal. It's fascination for a mentor. Devotion to a father. Trust given to a friend. Respect for the one who saved your life at the risk of his own. A movement driving you to play the game of betrayals and sacrifices. To write oaths of fidelity on parchment falling into dust the next second. To take lies as gospel.

A word of hate can kill. A word of love can give life back. The reverse is also possible.

Heroes, bastards and martyrs are on a road of passion, through a jungle of drama. And it's always a walk through a valley of tears.

Drives

In Milesvale, men have no choice but to let their animal side speak.

Of all the drives of the characters, pride is often the strongest. This pride of heroes we call hubris. Involved to the very end in conflicts with evermore important objectives, the arrogant hero never thinks about the consequences. Disaster always awaits those who give their strength without limits at the service of a cause. And desolation awaits those who get in the way of heroes.

Heroes have this anger, this rage that spills blood, this wrath that slays entire nations, this spite that kills the purest souls with sadness. Heroes are their first victims.

As for the bastards, they've got greed. Greed of gold, greed of involvement, greed of risk. This prudence of setting some aside for the bad days, the next days which will always be darker. They count and give an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. They always protect some treasure, build houses of cards. They also have this longing, this cupidity, this avidity. Bastards are predators. Primal instinct. What they want, they take.

As for the martyrs, are they victims or partners of the first two? They have the sloth of not choosing, the laziness of letting fatality dictate their fate. They allow themselves the luxury of suffering rather than fighting. It's a luxury and a lust. They taste pain as if it were sex, intensely, with the ecstatic joy of being worthy of it. Passion pierces their face when they're as one with their executioner. Martyrs don't give themselves to torture, they demand it. Because they are the expression of justice. A martyr is justice. He suffers and dies to write the future tables of the law. He is the example. He stands up in his own blood, braver than the hero, more careful than the bastard. And with his blood, he leaves a trace in Milesvale's virgin history.

Too animal to be humans, heroes, bastards and martyrs always speak the voice of their subconscious, and no other.



Flesh

The human being is the most bestial of animals. His fragile, naked flesh sets him apart in this ecosystem which only values survival.

He is the denial of Milesvale's hold and ugliness. Beauty of porcelain-like bodies, quivering of skins, depth of looks. Golden hair, painted teeth set with jewelry, statuary muscles. The forest of faces and skin colors.

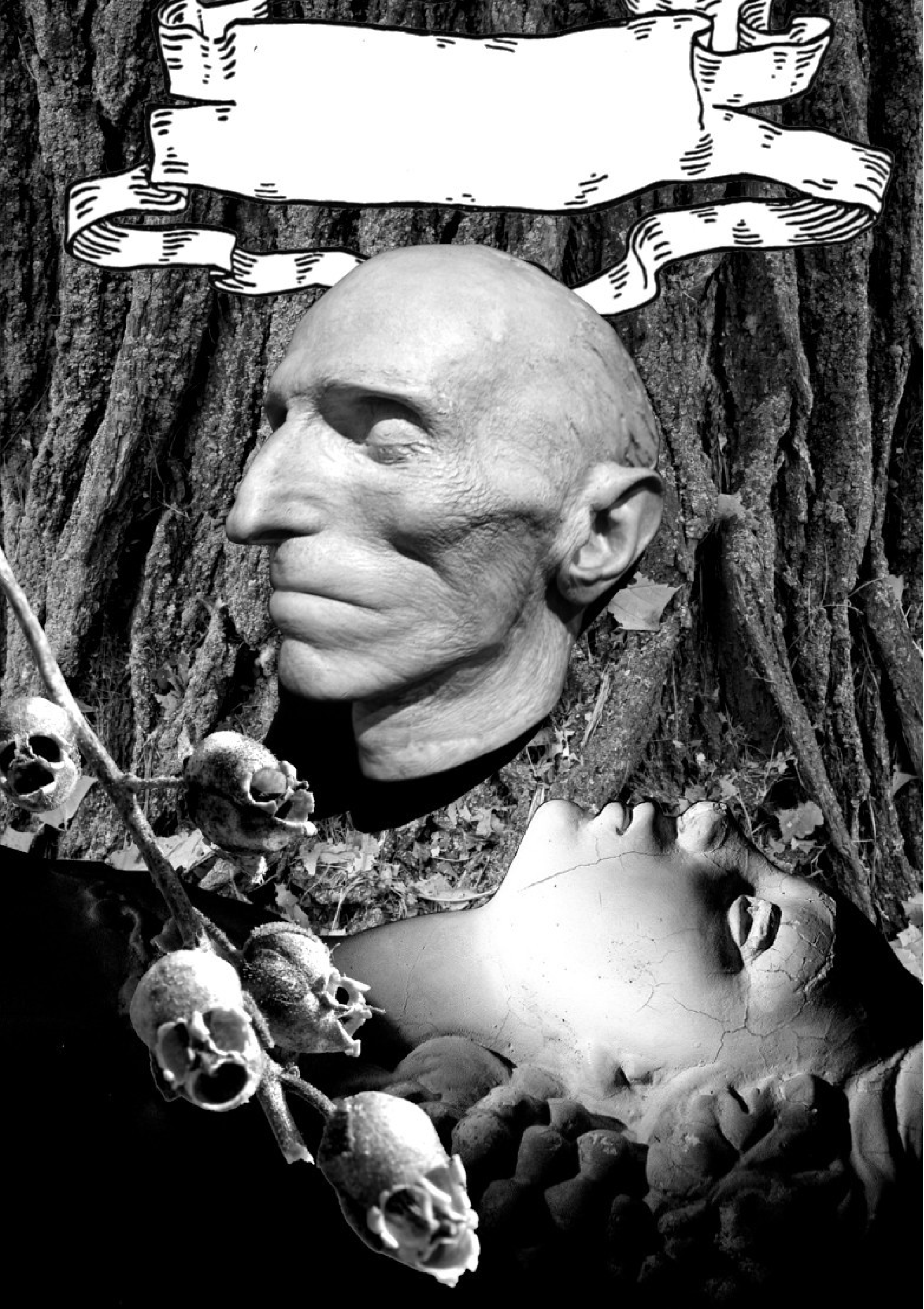
Living, living intensely in order not to die. Sensual embraces, getting warm, hungry for the other's body, the thrill, hands exploring, sex, always more to enjoy the end of times, sex to wage war, sex to celebrate one's lover, sex to dominate the world. Sex at any age to delay the withering of bodies and minds.

Synthesis of pheromones and moods, drinks of orgasms and deadly essence, marrow substrate, lymphatic ambrosia, orgone accumulators.

It's the promiscuity of bodies in all circumstances, overcrowded favelas, holds of galleys, coldness of caves. Cuddling together out of fear or through spite, sharing warmth and germs, bestial smells, the racket of stifling cities, diseases, throat clearing, contagion, boils, gangrene, skinless flesh. Epidemics, plague, panleprosy, havoc. The hoarse breath of medicastrates.

Fights, another communion of bodies. Prowesses, impetus, races. The crash of weapons and bodies, bones breaking, swords clashing. Axes. The sound of the bugle in the depths of the woods. The science of sword fighters. Cannonades.

The sound of a saw. Arms and legs fall with the sound of trunks. Amputations, torture, bites of monsters. Transformation of the body. Automaton limbs, golem pineal gland, bark skin. Horla symbioses. Flesh is the new frontier.



SENTENCES

I am the one who speaks through two mouths:
one mouth for men
and one mouth for God.

12 examples of character creation

Madness: A voice in my head wants to dictate my behavior. A ghost crouching behind the trees in the forest of my mind. Who is it?

Memory: I hold a severed head in my arms, covered by a bloodied plastic bag. I want to remember. Who is it? Am I a murderer?

Nature: I want to escape from this pack of dogs hunting me through the forest.

Hold: I want to fight against this disease turning me into an animal. Was it the bite of that beast or the strange forest I crossed?

Egregore: Spirits following me everywhere I go. Do they wish me good or evil? What appearance, what powers do they have? I'm scared.

Society: I want to climb the ladder of society to reach supreme power, be it sovereign, religious or technologic.

Clan: We are blood brothers who want to vow their life to the fight against Horlas. We will sacrifice everything but our brotherhood.

Religion: I'm a monk who wants to complete a pilgrimage through the forest with his companions to Santiago de Compostela.

Science: I want to pass over the Wall of Shame because I have a beacon which can deactivate its electromagnetic field. I can run away from Milesvale.

Amour: I only wanted her to love me. And now she's not breathing anymore. Woe is me!

Drives: I want to achieve feats of chivalry and destroy hideous monsters to prove my bastard of a father I'm a real man.

Flesh: When he has fought me or made love to me, he will not want to know any other sensation.

144 sentences examples

You can write an infinite number of sentences. Failing to cover infinity, here are some examples. Players can even write them exactly in the same way if they don't have any ideas or if they want to try an exercise in style.

1 Madness

1 I saw my mother in my bed, but she's supposed to be dead.
2 Seeing the Horla in the circle of raised stones made me scream and flee.
3 All those centipedes rising from the earth,
they want to climb on me, bite me, gnaw me...
4 I love you but sometimes I want to hit you
until the pulp of your beautiful face bursts.
5 The face of the man I killed appeared in the crowd.
6 I have become the queen of the forest's inhabitants. It doesn't matter if they're dead.
7 I had a terrible migraine; I saw worms pass through my field of vision.
8 Last night, I dreamt a Horla was devouring my sexual organs.
9 The witch cursed me by shouting in putrid language.
10 This seal belongs to me. It makes me the king of this forest. It tells me what to do.
11 My God, all my friends have gone insane.
12 She gave me this strange potion to make me forget the pain.
This was days and days ago.

2 Memory

1 This man pretends to be my brother but I don't remember him.
2 I don't remember what happened that night.
3 A Horla murdered my parents.
4 I won't get any rest before I kill this deer missing from my tally.
5 I hate him, he hurt me so much, but I can't live without him.
6 I carry the bow of an old one to take up all of his talent.
7 Who am I?
8 Her family is looking for me to make me pay for my crimes.
9 I would like to forget what I saw inside the cairn.
10 The spirits of the trees have spoken to me and want to protect me.
11 I think she's trustworthy.
12 The river contains the memory of those who have drowned in it.
I assimilated it by drinking its water.

3 Nature

1 I'm completely lost at the heart of this hostile forest.
2 I mated with the tree.
I still feel the mark of its bark and its thorns in my flesh.
3 The boar broke my leg with its tusks.
4 I harvested simples to make potions.
5 The mushrooms grew all over the cave overnight.

6 I feel something squirming under my flesh. I'm afraid of what it can be.
7 At last, I can give birth.
8 We bivouacked in the trees, safe from the worms in the ground.
9 I found the road leading to Santiago de Compostela.
10 The sea calls me when I sleep.
11 I pushed my enemy from the mountain top. I think he's dead.
12 Dying from thirst, I faint in the dunes.

4 Hold

1 My children are starting to walk on all fours again.
2 A third arm is growing on my body and I don't control it.
3 I want to punish all of those who talk with animals.
4 I saw him in a narcotic vision. Buried under the humus...
The Master of the Thousand Young... Indescribable...
5 I was the victim of ritual abuse and will get my revenge if I don't lose my mind first.
6 We have purified these monsters by fire.
7 This Horla looks so much like my mother... If only I could see its whole body...
8 His skin has started to change colors. It's suppurating.
9 She told me things that made me shiver. I'm not sure I will accept.
10 Thousands. Of. Rats.
11 They're all dead over there. Bloated bodies.
12 I bribed the burgomaster with a case of caps.

5 Egregore

1 I wonder if what they say about this castle is true.
2 They all think I'm the murderer.
3 I still hear their screams, louder than ever.
4 The White Lady has appeared on the road again last night.
She looks like my sister, but that can't be possible.
5 A powerful Horla deity controls this forest.
6 I spilled my blood on the pentagram, ate the flesh doll
and said the incantation in putrid language.
7 I killed that thing. Its black blood spurted on me and entered my skin.
8 The guns that were placed in the circle
were the same used during this shootout, centuries ago.
9 The whole forest got angry. Thorns bruised me,
branches whipped me, the ground opened under my steps.
10 This little girl looks as familiar as she seems troubling.
11 What I saw couldn't be real. Surely it was a dream.
12 The old man came to meet me. Fate has placed him on my path.

6 Society

1 We're establishing a trader's guild in Noirmont-Ferrant.
2 I've just been arrested for criticizing the authorities in public.
3 She's an affront to common decency. It sickens me.
4 I've conquered a new forest in my lord's name.
5 We have condemned flies for their crimes against our cattle.
6 I won the battle but lost many men.
7 I spit in the face of those pretending to be the masters in this godless and lawless world.
8 I'm a spy from the Chinese army infiltrated in Milesvale.
9 We're embarking on a ship that will cross the Tyrants Sea to Carthage.
10 This trapper swindled me on the quality of her skins.
11 I'm writing a book explaining that man is fundamentally evil.
12 Our people have been chased from their native ground and survive in a slum of Metro.

7 Clan

1 I'm a Horla infiltrated amongst humans and the Watchmen Caste is hunting me down.
2 My tribe must overcome.
3 I'm studying sarcomancy to learn to create the new flesh.
4 I like his company, but would I put my life at risk for him?
5 I fight with my father's sword.
6 I ran to flee from the Cleaners Caste.
7 All the oaths, seals and blood pacts
will not silence the lies hiding under our alliance.
8 She saved my life so I would owe her.
9 I took no pleasure in killing him, I just obeyed orders.
10 As a member of the Black Lodge, I think humans must be enslaved.
11 I will follow the Crow's Way. Transforming into man is a sin.
12 I know I disgrace the Machiavellian line by becoming a painter.

8 Religion

1 I've converted to catholicism so I could marry him.
2 The rocks spoke to me last night.
3 I'm off to harvest fertility plants under the moon's glow.
4 Christ, who died on the Cross and was reborn,
will come back on Earth and live his Passion again for all our sakes.
5 You say a god created this hell? I never asked myself that question.
6 The 5 pillars of Islam will help me find the way
out of this forest hell. Inch'Allah !
7 I ate the host but it tasted weird.
I prayed in front of the icons but they had a strange look on their faces.
8 Let everything burn, by Moloch!
9 Iä Shub-Niggurath, the Black Goat with a Thousand Young!
10 I'm off to attend the talmudic discussions taking place on the ruins of the crash.
11 Hold and purity. Everything is in the tao.
12 No god would be cruel enough to make me be born in Milesvale.

9 Science

1 My carriage leads me to a workshop on the dried canals of Venice.
2 I want to find the person appearing on this old polaroid picture.
3 I think this warrior equipped in bioware
has woken up from a stasis he had been under since the Golden Age.
4 This implant with cogs and Horla symbiosis seems trustworthy to me.
5 I received laser shots from these strange border guards along the Wall of Shame.
6 It would be a good idea to grease this musket.
7 My 4x4 will soon run out of fuel.
8 I'm an ashkenazi automaton looking for a conscience.
9 Our alchemy workshop is on the brink of discovering the philosophical stone.
10 God knows all the answers.
11 I'm working hard at the forge.
12 All books must be burned.

10 Love

1 I knew it was him from the first look.
2 What a bastard! One-eyed Balkan whore!
3 At the heart of this terrible battle, I wanted to kiss him.
4 My master is so smart. I could listen to him until the night's darkest hours.
5 Together, we bathed
in the blood of a goat, reciting our mutual oath.
6 I love her but she shouldn't have gotten in my way.
Too bad if I have to give her away to the militia.
7 I'm ready to die for my children.
8 Men and women kneel as I pass by, out of deference.
9 We're like two trees in which the same sap flows. You're my son, I'm your mother.
10 I will not give up on you.
11 She told me my parents were dead.
12 If only I could trust again...

11 Drives

1 I'm ready to build my reputation as a heroine on a wasteland.
2 I'm taking part in the gold rush in Transylvania.
3 Last night, in the depths of the woods, I don't know if I took part in an artistic happening,
collective hysteria, a pagan ritual or an orgy.
4 This mysterious, sensual red flower will bring me power and knowledge.
5 What's the point of keeping on fighting?
6 I've cooked pork stew, fattened chickens and venison for an historical feast.
7 Only by cutting her head off will I find some rest.
8 I don't want to enter this forest.
9 To feel emotions is not part of my weaknesses.
10 I'm appearing before the Plague Doctors' tribunal.
11 Battle is more important than victory.
12 I don't have any explanation to what I did.

12 Flesh

1 My sword is bloodthirsty.
2 We're going to make love again.
3 Her skin is white like a summer wedding.
4 We're twenty men and women rotting in this tiny jail.
5 This morning at the leper-house, many of last night's companions are wrapped in sheets.
6 My hands have been putrefied ever since I breathed a part of my life in him.
7 I'm losing... so much blood.
8 They were naked and walking on all fours, grunting.
9 I jumped from roof to roof to catch the swordfighter.
10 Two weeks eating only dirt and worms. I can't take it anymore.
11 I'm so happy to be able to hurt him,
I can't wait to test my new tools.
12 I vanquished the wolf-beast but it tore off one of my arms.

144 power examples

1 Madness

1 **Yellow Opium:** An opium from unknown origin, strongly addictive, which gives delirious visions and makes you be as one with the King in Yellow.
2 **Black Meat:** A type of dirt or the meat of an unknown animal. Black food, corrosive and spongy, liked by the Horlas. Canal to Shub-Niggurath.
3 **Illusions:** Reality is only a distorted perception of facts. I know how to distort the others' and make them believe my phantasmagorias.
4 **Psychological war:** My heart is a general, my mind a strategist and words are my army. Nobody survives the mental wars I wage.
5 **Shadow Servant**: Thanks to black magic, I fleshed out my shadow. It is my servant and will obey my conscious... and unconscious orders.
6 **Metempsychosis:** The art of swapping one mind with another. I am a bold traveler for whom bodies are only vessels.
7 **Telepathic spying:** The art of putting souls on wires. I read into faces, eyes and hearts, collect lies and personal secrets.
8 **Phobomancy:** The fears of others are paintings. I can handle the brush wonderfully and make a masterpiece of terror out of the smallest phobia.
9 **Messianism:** A God or an impostor, I'm the prophet of a new era. Crowds are subjugated and follow me; every man venerates or hates me.
10 **Hand of madness:** My hand shook the hand of the King in Yellow once. With one stroke or one strike, I'm offering tickets to the ship of fools.
11 **Demiurgy:** I create maps, globes and other objects containing worlds. One touch is enough to be swallowed by them.
12 **Mnemomancy:** Memory is a blank book on which I write what I want. False memories, fake beliefs, science of the flashback.

2 Memory

1 **Flashbacks:** I'm an explorer of oblivion. Little by little, I pierce the wall of the memory deadzone. Striking visions of the past.
2 **Psychokinesis:** With the tip of my fingers, I read the egregore contained in objets, access scenes of the past, stored memories or lost talents.
3 **Anamnesy:** I'm unable to forget. It's a blessing and a curse. There's not one second of my past not currently haunting me.
4 **Tarot of the past:** Lost memories due to oblivion feed egregore. It prints on the tarot cards which then tell me about the rediscovered past.
5 **Tarot of the future:** The Tarocchi della Florenza tell the future as much as they cause it. Battle cartomancy or divinatory slowness. Imprecise, formidable.
6 **Psychokinetic journey:** Touching objects allows me to travel through time and space, towards the most significant event linked to this object. Labyrinth of causes.
7 **Interrogating the dead:** Through their minds or their rotten mouth, the dead speak to whoever wants to play along their extortions. About life, the afterlife and so on.
8 **Oblivion touch:** A stroke and I break your memory. A scratch and I steal it from you. A slap and your memory will be a graveyard, and I the gravedigger. Amen.
9 **Immunity to oblivion:** I don't know why my friends always forget everything.



Should I reveal I remember everything? The truth is sometimes better left unsaid...

10 Corax Genealomnesy: Corax only live ten years but carry the memory of their ancestors for two centuries. A well of science with many junctions.

11 Inverted psychometry: Artisan, artist, forger, I print memories feelings, talents in objects. A love ring, a raging sword, a clever book.

12 Transfer of souls into objects: I copy or cut and paste souls into books, I create a castle in which I hide my memory. A room for each recollection, a woman in a frame.

3 Nature

1 Survivalism: Hunting, feeding, bivouacking, fighting, natural history, tannery. Survival in the forest or in hostile areas has no secrets for me.

2 Decoctions: Milesvale's nature provides me with fauna, flora and minerals rich with substances of amazing power. Drugs, balms, remedies, poisons.

3 Shamanism: In harmony with the forest and the beings living there, I speak the language of spirit animals, perceive the future, curse my enemies.

4 Animal communication: In thoughts, with putrid language, pheromones, gestures or cries, I can speak to animals if I forget my own humanity.

5 Projection in the forest of spirits: The forest of spirits overlaps with the material forest. A world of egregore where the dead and Horlas rule. Only for daring travelers.

6 Struggle against the forest: With an axe or alchemy, with napalm or magic, I swore to end the forest and all the ignominies it shelters.

7 Cataplasms: I use herbs, resins, leaves and maggots to make bandages, balms and cataplasms, and cure gangrene, phtisis and infections.

8 Vegetal symbiosis: Regenerative sap, epidermic cultures, bark skin. The new vegetal order mates with humans. The latter can profit from the union.

9 Pyromancy: Ferns, trees, bushes. Everything must burn. Pyrokinesis, embers, tanks of fuel. Fire is man's best friend against nature.

10 Necrogastry: I have the power of resurrecting everything I once ate. Animals, plants, objects... and humans... It waters one's mouth!

11 Tactile fertility: Under each of my steps, vegetation grows at breakneck speed. Vegetal explosion, a tempest of creepers and hatchings, a rain of spores.

12 Withering: Everything Cresus touched turned into gold. Everything I touch necroses, rots and degenerates in the blink of an eye. Whenever I want.

4 Hold

1 Contact of the Horlas: You hear a lot about Horlas but nobody sees them. I have the dark power to call them at my side. At last, I'm going to know...

2 Horla creation: Animal flesh, dirt, egregore, rituals, I'm ready to take all necessary risks to create a Horla with my own hands.

3 Horla symbiosis: Horlas hybrid themselves with human flesh, blood, brain and heart. Unconscious hold, result of an experience or a Faustian pact.

4 Hold detection: Hold has a smell, carries hormones, leaves a visual mark in the infrared, in auras, in the forest of spirits. Horlas!

5 Hold destruction: Hold is a corpuscle the mind can destroy. With one gesture, I purify the withered and annihilate the plenty.

6 Contact of Shub-Niggurath: Nobody knows where Shub-Niggurath lives nor what it looks like. With drugs, shamanism or madness, I know how to see and contact it. Will I dare to?

7 Transformation into a Horla: Horsane (a human with Horla blood), victim of a curse

or daring sorcerer, I can transform into a Horla. Little by little or all at once.
8 **Contact of Horla deities:** They rule over the forest, imperials. Horla deities, monstrous mythological entities. Just one ritual, one dream and I will talk to them.
9 **Infected by the Havoc:** I have the Havoc. A lightning and ultracontagious type of plague. I rot on the spot and can die at any moment.
10 **Vampirism (Kevorkian line):** I have the taste of blood and sex. Egregore flows in my dead veins. I am a vampire, damned under the hold of Shub-Niggurath.
11 **Hold harvest:** They say hold is bad. It's first and foremost a source of energy I collect where it swarms abundantly: Horlas, sorcerers.
12 **Inquisition:** My faith is flawless. I dedicate my life to tracking the demons that haunt the forest and men. No holds are barred.

5 Egregore

1 **Metamorphosis:** Whether I control it or not, my appearance changes. Egregore gives my body a legendary look. A human yesterday, a myth tomorrow.
2 **Charm:** By touch or through a voult (an object related to the target), the sorcerer charms. Love, luck, fertility, health, everything hatches.
3 **Pact with the dead:** The dead are eager to trade with the living. The contract provisions are cruel. Their patience is as big as their powers.
4 **Placing cursed charges:** Sorcerers charm beings or objects. This way, they carry an evil spell, are the eyes of the sorcerer or protect him from the blowback.
5 **Gastromancy:** I'm a cook putting all of his love in his dishes. I can also put other feelings there and all sorts of things that will reach who eats them.
6 **Limbic shortcuts:** There are strange forests only the initiated pass through. I get lost in them and lose track of time. The shortcut leads to miles away.
7 **Allegorism:** I unconsciously create humanoid Horlas from feelings or concepts (the Pain Man, Mister My Past, Lady Vengeance).
8 **Auto-charm:** Some sorcerers are their own targets of privileged charming. Luck, health, body changes, anti-spell protection, lucid dreams.
9 **Poltergeist:** Sorcerers deflect in objects the anger contained in egregore, causing violent manifestations in haunted places.
10 **Exorcism:** Egregore, demons, madness and Horlas can haunt bodies. Exorcism requires faith, courage, rock solid knowledge.
11 **Breaking spells:** To break the spells put on a victim means starting a magic fight against a sorcerer. The one losing the fight suffers blowback head on.
12 **Egregorism:** The art of increasing the egregore's charge. It gives body to legends, creates new ones, disseminates rumors, resurrects fears.

6 Society

1 **Speech:** Great orators rally a crowd to their cause with a single word or tirade. When they make a speech, they are writing History.
2 **Politics:** No matter the idea, as long as I have the power. No matter the people as long as I dominate them. No matter the means as long as I dictate the end.
3 **Legal:** Talion law, tribal council, vulgar law, seigniorial law, religious law. The law belongs to whom can seduce it with its language.
4 **Finance:** Trade, caps, ducats, bill of exchange. I know the value of things and beings since I decide it. Everything's for trade!
5 **Sovereignty:** Whether from blood, force or verb,

I was born to rule and this world in ruins is offering itself to me like a dog.
6 Rebellion: I'm my only master and god. I am of all the insurrections, all the guerrillas, all the struggles. Anonymous rebel.
7 Rumor: People are only sponges. You just have to whisper them a rumor and egregore will spread it through every layer of society. This is my weapon.
8 Military strategy: The science of fields and the knowledge of men. Pitched battles and muffled coups. War is an art and I'm a maestro.
9 *Éminence grise*: Crowned heads can fall. It's better to pull strings in the shadows. Lovers, counselors, manipulators: masters of the world.
10 Illegality: Laws accept the audacious as worthy of raping them. They are made to halt the fools and make me win the race.
11 Escape: Whether from stone or wood, heart or flesh, no jail can keep for long the rebel and clever lord I am.
12 Crowd control: A crowd always needs a master. Messiah, tyrant, passionaria, I talk to it with the language of the heart, so it follows me into hell.

7 Clan

1 Blood pact: Family, master, homeland. Under the hold of egregore, no link is stronger than the one for which I spilled my own blood.
2 Honor code: When state, religion and morality have disappeared, we carry our own code in our blood. Those who don't are animals.
3 Allies: Since we have lost our brothers, since the world wants our doom and there's no hope alone, let's ally together against death.
4 Contacts: I am neither stronger nor handsome nor smart. I know people who are. They're dying to do me the best or the worst of favors.
5 Conspiracy: If you shake my hand, count your fingers afterwards. I know who whispers behind your back.
I'm the worst of them all. I'm the end of certainties.
6 Blackmail: There is no glory that doesn't hide a shame. It's like a shadow only I can see. My silence is golden and that has no price.
7 Mafia: Only the mafia is a legitimate law because it is paid with the real price, the price of blood. I defend our cause because it enriches and goes beyond me.
8 Butterfly effect: I can read egregore's threads of fate, I see how everything is connected. I know which puppet to pull to make and empire fall.
9 Reading and speaking between the lines: Princely courts are gilded cages for lions. To be able to make yourself understood through convoluted allusions is a must for survival.
10 Mouth of scorn: One word from me and your reputation crumbles. A speech and you'd rather be dead a hundred times. I am the mouth of scorn. All fear me.
11 Diplomacy: The art of saying nice things to justify exactions. Bloody pillagers, cruel condottieres, magnanimous princes, all listen.
12 Poisons: Everything's poison. It's the dose that makes the poison. Love, venom, drug, acid, metal, beings and things, the choice of weapons and victims.

8 Religion

1 Golemism : Emeth, I give you truth and life. Meth, I erase your Aleph and give you death. A raw material gorged with egregore, at my service.
2 Laying-on of hands: My hands cure as long as my heart is pure.

If it falters for an instant, may the Almighty forgive what my fingers will do.
3 **Lazarean necromancy:** Death is my savior, who heals my sorrows.
My executioner, who chastises my faults. My shepherd, who knows all the answers. Amen.
4 **Runic magic:** Each rune is a word and each word a spark of lightning.
Egregore has increased the power of runes tenfold. Tattoos, engravings, gestures, fire.
5 **Druidic magic:** Only druids understand the telluric forces coursing through Milesvale,
speak to them, command or disobey them. White or black druids.
6 **Negation of miracles:** I don't believe in this so-called magic. If I don't believe in it,
it can't reach me. I hope I never believe. I pray for it.
7 **Miracles:** To make miracles, you just have to believe. But believe so strongly that you burn
your whole being in your faith. And the rest of the world with it.
8 **Divinity:** The audacious don't believe, idiots pray to false idols.
I'm not a man, I'm the new, the only true god.
9 **Cabal:** The forest, this gigantic Tree of the Sephiroth, carries the secret message of God.
Only the greatest scholars of the Torah will understand it.
10 **Control of the ecosystem:** Telluric forces run through me and I control them.
Climate, nature and beings obey and move along with my fingers.
11 **Mystical trance:** Peyotl, meditation, Horla symbiosis. To each his means to go into
a trance and explore the countless mystical stratas of Milesvale.
12 **Horla pact:** Thus spoke my Horla master: “Call me I don't speak.
Cry for me I don't suffer. Give yourself you don't serve me.” I live for him.

9 Science

1 **Calcimancy :** the art of blowing hot and cold. In Dantean proportions.
Air, metal, water, blood, I modify their temperatures at will.
2 **Photomancy:** Shadow and light are pigments of the same canvas, of which I'm the master.
Blinding, darken, scrutinize with a magnifying glass, look from far away.
3 **Endo-artifacts:** Internal soft machines, Horla symbiosis, orgones in the blood,
golem-limbs, cypher-brain. I'm the new flesh. Fragile harmony.
4 **Chronomancy:** Time is a thread. I unwind its tangle. Stopping it, rewinding it
or unwinding it is for me a cruel and dangerous game. Paradoxes.
5 **Mastering gravity:** Flesh levitates, metal doesn't weight anything, air becomes a ball
of antimatter. Teufelsball. Heavy art of gravity. Das Faust psychic school.
6 **Engineering:** Repairing relics, endemic technology, reinvented know-how
or clever resourcefulness. Milesvale's machines are infinite.
7 **Cypher decryption:** The supreme code of white magic that would destroy all the Horlas,
White Cypher. The filthy code of black magic, DNA of Shub-Niggurath, Black Cypher.
8 **Artificial intelligence:** Automatons of Sion, Golems of Prague, Mechs of the Hope Center,
Difference Machines. Matter thinks, feels, ponders. Will I understand it?
9 **Orgone chemistry:** Orgasmic energy, autonomous metafluid, living plasma,
orgones irrigate all biological beings. Orgone accumulators, mad inventions.
10 **Soft machines:** Sentient metal, nanomachines, robotic fluid.
Soft machines never keep the same shape from one moment to the next. Terrible potential.
11 **Alchemy:** Searching for the philosophical stone, matter transmutation, decoctions,
explosives. Mad scientists. Magic and science in the same crucible.
12 **Kinesy:** So fast I see the the budding of a lightning bolt in all its details.
So fast you die before I even want to kill you.

10 Love

1 Love magic: Orgone chemistry, magic potions, control of egregore,
I have submitted love to my will. I will be loved. Never again will I suffer.
2 Hate magic: Hate is a wave irradiating from me and others.
A net of anger I stretch and unstretch at will. As you sow chaos, so shall you reign.
3 Domination speech: I don't expect much from others. Only their complete obeisance.
I have no power but know a thousand ways to order. Amen.
4 Karmic vengeance: Luck is a weight never staying for long
on the same pan of the scales. My enemies will know my karma lesson. I weigh...
5 Reading emotions: Facial expressions, color of looks, hidden meaning of words,
dialogue of pheromones... You can hide everything, your emotions speak for you.
6 Sacrificial heroism: Be careful of I, who was ready yesterday to give everything.
Because today I have nothing to lose. Without any scruples, my strength knows no limits.
7 Link of fates: You can do anything to live without ties, I can see the threads of fate
and know how to knot them together. Just like I know how to break them off.
8 Emphatic link: I want to believe our souls are tied because I feel each of your
sorrows, angers and joys, in my own heart.
9 Mental enslavement: I don't ask you to think but to perform.
Horla symbiont, telepathy, egregore manipulation. Mighty chains of my slaves.
10 Mythomancy: I lie because of people who believe everything I say.
I lie because my lies become the truth.
11 Molding desires: I model with my heart what I can't with my hands.
Feelings, desires, passions, longings, angers, mine and others'.
12 Weapon brotherhood: United under a same running gauntlet, bleeding from the same wounds,
fighting the same enemies, the same fears. You're more than a blood brother.

11 Drives

1 Emotion transfer through art: A painting or a sculpture carries more emotions
that any speech or look. Art is a calling, art is a weapon, art is sorcery.
2 Telepathy: I wander without fear in the maze of your thoughts.
I know each room and secret passage, better than you know them yourself.
3 Chaos therapy: Randomness is a wheel on fire than only the bravest dare to push.
Woe betide those you stand in my disastrous way!
4 Hubris: No pride is more insane and devastating than that of heroes.
No victory is deadlier than theirs. No sin is greater than hubris.
5 Cannibal magic: I am a gourmet, a seer, a precursor. I capture egregore
where it is most concentrated. Delicious or putrid human bodies.
6 Luck stealing: If luck smiles upon you, don't pass me by because it will be unfaithful to you.
Luck is a lady too handsome for me not to steal it.
7 Calming down: My hand cures from the poisons of the mind, my embrace frees from the prison
of desires, my voice makes fear disappear. Blessed indifference.
8 Molding hopes: I will give you the courage to defend your cause again,
I will give you the illusion that your dreams will get fulfilled. Or I will strip any meaning away from your life.
9 Science of humors: Blood, lymph, yellow bile, black bile. I know the fluids
which animate the body, I know how they're attuned to egregore. I am their master.
10 Eye of justice: To each I can tell their wrongs and their virtues.
My eye sees in their aura the greatness of saints, the horror of guilt. And judges you.

11 Annihilation of fear: General of invincible troops, suicidal guerrilla fighter or victim who never grinds his teeth, I bend my fear and that of others.
12 Dream travel: Dreams make the strangest, most dangerous and fascinating forest I had the occasion of traveling through. Careless traveler, dream Horlas, mission.

12 Flesh

1 Fencing school: My way of handling the sword looks like no other. My school is my signature, my strength and my vanity. Metal lace, strike, surgery.
2 Martial art: Hashishian Fighting, Killer Instinct, Corax morphing struggle... Milesvale's inhabitants have become weapons for lack of having rifles.
3 Firearms kata: A man with a firearm is dangerous. A man who masters the firearms kata is the very incarnation of flaming Death.
4 Blood magic: Blood, the perfect vehicle of egregore, carrier of a carnal taste, vector of strength and disease, seal of pacts, is the new manna.
5 Somatism: I have stopped talking since my body expresses itself instead and have stopped fighting since my body is a monster. I am totipotence.
6 Healing through hands: May my hands give you love and take your suffering, may they give you comfort and take your gangrene. Ecstatic exchange.
7 Mastery of sore points: Humans are maps. I know which place to visit to stop or begin everything again. They carry inside themselves their own life and death.
8 Sarcomancy: I can prepare the sarcomantic liquid and change flesh into a workable fluid. Tattooing, sex, torture. Long live the new flesh!
9 Lycanthropy: The moon talks to me, the forest resonates in me. I have no other choice but to answer the call. My flesh is only an envelope to be torn out.
10 Contortionism: Flesh evolves, I am the new link. Breaking one's bones, creasing one's skin, bending one's body, to become a weapon, a tool, a leaf.
11 Sexual magic: Orgones and egregore, two canals of power. Sexual magic is as violent as it is intoxicating. Horlas, slaves and gods. Orgies, torture.
12 Mastery of pain: My body is only a tree without seep. Sensations are illusions of the mind. I don't see my spilled blood, I don't feel my bones.



UNIVERSE

Milesvale is at the hands
of mythological entities.
We'll rip it away from them
for we are
mythological heroes.

What do I have to know of the universe before starting playing?

The paragraph at the beginning of the rules describes all you have to know about Milesvale's universe. The objective is not to explore this universe as faithfully as possible. The objective is that players build their own forest hell.

Based on this, themes, powers, playing advice and all the contextual pieces of information are only suggestions. They explain how the author of Milesvale sees this universe. The players are free to respect this vision, change it or be inspired by it.

Egregore makes many things possible and excuses all betrayals. There is no game supplement talking about dragons in Milesvale. But the players can put some in their session if they want. If there are people who believe in dragons, then dragons exist.

Reading information about Milesvale's context is not required. However, reading this information and applying it during the game will allow you to fertilize your imagination. Not everyone wants to write a universe. Players can play the characters described in these context chapters or use them as extras.

Universe supplements are thus toolboxes, fiction drawers, starting fires. Each paragraph was written to initiate an adventure. No element of the universe is fixed or definitive.

Nothing is sacred.

Entire civilizations can disappear under the characters' actions. They can create new religions and new moralities. Horlas will take over if the characters don't stop them. State leaders and saints will die. Anonymous paupers will replace them. It's up to the players to seize Milesvale's universe. It's a land of possibles they can at will plunder or cultivate.

Onomastikon

1 Madness:
Aldritch the Demented, Antonella Marcotti the Oracle, Nihil Club-Footed, Astrid the Devastated, Doctor Havoc, Dame Elvire of Vénissieux, Melchior Hazard, Khermia Ardrinipal the Goddess with Two Faces, the King in Yellow, the Hermit of the Desert, Ego the Sufi

2 Memory:
Cecil Cattanei, Cronos Archéon, Sven Hargard the Chronomancian, Lord Nobody, Enguerran Parsifal, Sancho Panza, Mister Clement, Candy, Julietta, Sister Affront, Professor Clarice Stern, the White Lady.

3 Nature:
Duncan McCimwair, Tewennog Bark Head, Titorel the Black Bird, Guillermo the Grass Snake, Vein, the Bastard, Gaïa, Powder, Dame Hermeline, Tempest, Djalila of the Sands, Fat Manu.

4 Hold:
Stanislas Zimmer Hagen Das Faust, Mister Canker, Xilen Mardrecorn, Gamesh Hasdrubal, Lady Warkandre, Charcot, Ohm the liquidator, Baba-Yaga, Harvranghdini-zal
the Horla deity of cities, Crovandre the Sow-Mother, Sire Stench, Darkness the She-Wolf.

5 Egregore:
Calahantos, Lady Gawain of the City of Ys, Magdalid, Gantz Medius Vangelore, Armando Cesare Munchausen, Helmina Tiercedante, Count Zaroff, Whitess the Ancestor, Corvox the Black Druid, Lhorelaï, Father Envy, Needle the queen of Irminsul.

6 Society:
Adelante Rosario, Sargeant Isaac O.J. Hollister, Rachid El Alamein, Imphysto Vegas of Palermo, Sultan Suleymane Abd-al-Massim, Bartolomeo Sforza, Amalie of Saxe-Cobourg, Sheik Mazik Al Azri, Clovicienne the Empress of Rats, Marquessa Ingrid Von Siegfried, Morgane of Avalon, Valeria Etcherienko.

7 Clan:
Don Frazetti, Ettore Stanza, Rodrigue Ibn-el-Ahmek, Don Miguel de Pamplona, Falkenstein, Fidelio Cisty Don Zepego, Don Grabini Castiglione, Helfrida Von Klopp, Hex the Noctohyena, Mater Dolorosa, Sylveline Abandonment, Viviane of the Rocks, Red.

8 Religion:
Cardinal Giovanni Paulo Attorezzi Borgia, Cardinal Valere Köningen, Laelith de Sicca, Cardinal Don Hernandez de la Roca, Garibaldi Vitelozzo Orsini, His Eminence Claudios de Catalo, Inquisitor Aguirre of Carnac, Canopy the Watchwoman, Druid Stump, Unction of the Fjords, Madam Khân the dogma burner, Leïla “Shortbreath” Evanovna.

9 Science:
Atlas Archeon, Vojta Fremde, Heteredox, Jürgen Unheimlich Zimmer Hagen Das Faust, Professor “Matto” Misato Kuromichi de Ishii, Giuseppe Fermi, Samira El-Azim, Cyhexhandia, Emiliano Contzän, Constanz Mojavrinsk, Dame Arsenic, Doctor Sorina Solipsis.

10 Love:
Clelia of Arc, Anastasia Viy Heartless, Giacomo Bartholdi, Richard of Heguenore, Gregor della Sanctia Patrizia, Cordelia of Aragon, Morella who feeds the Cyst-Spiders, Orpheus, Granny Crustline, Liz of the Cornwalls, Merwinn, Lars the Anger Incarnate.

11 Drives:
Syllistin Archibald, Selim Furli, Justice, Edouard Highmouth de Dunois, Lord Lydon Rotten, Heimdall Totenkopf Zimmer Hagen Das Faust, Lorcamor Ben Gezirah, Maskonymous, Captain Magdalena Von Bismarck, Jeannerette, Versailles Cixi Lin Chu, Blandine of Blood.

12 Flesh:
The Sigh Contessa, Ysolde Y Sangre, Chimene Blas, Gabrielle de Gonzalve, Knight of Valensac, Baron Ambush, Cormon the Prophetic Cadaver, Yawiko Wang N’Guyen, Cassilda, Lavinia the Livid, Four Fingers, Enguerran de Marigny.

Discriminations: Gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality and handicap

In Milesvale, discrimination is mostly present in societies based on Golden Age models. Great monotheistic religions, feudality, traditionalist familial cells. Societies based on new models are neither more tolerant nor more moral but are too young to foster discriminatory traditions. Everybody in these societies is judged only on their survival potential. Oblivion has also been erased and rewritten, cards have been reshuffled. No one knows who was a pariah and who was dominant. And cards are reshuffled differently from one region to the next. The post-apocalyptic, diverse and balkanized universe of Milesvale is a land of possibles.

If players want to play a character from a minority without it becoming an obstacle, they can decide they are evolving in a tolerant society, or with its own discriminatory criteria. If a player wants to play a woman inquisitor, she can decide the Catholic Church now ordains women priests in the region where the story takes place, or that there is an order of religious women sitting in the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition.

At the contrary, players can play characters from an oppressed minority because they want to focus on the struggle against the oppressor. It's the perfect occasion to play heroes, bastards or martyrs. For instance, during the mutant guerrilla in Ukraine, the catholic church persecutes mutants and those who have romantic relationships with them. A perfect ground for an adventure with plenty of violence and drama.

If a character comes from a minority, it can be considered a handicap. And as long as this handicap is written down as a sentence, it becomes a resource for future conflicts, which objectives can be ambitious. Slaves are stronger than masters, a one-armed person can defeat a whole army, a mute can convince a whole cenacle with a flutter of lashes. Emotion and motivation are the main resources of the characters; therefore, oppressed and hurt people are those with the greatest potential.

Playing a monster

A monster from Milesvale's forest hell can very well be a hero, a bastard or martyr. If one the players plays a monster, she can give the others an adversity to knock down, a referent to measure their own humanity or even a model to reach.

A monster can have many shapes:

† A human of normal appearance, with monstrous mores.
† A human suffering from a mutation.
† A Gnome, half-human and immune to oblivion.
† A human carrying a Horla symbiont.
† A Horsane, human with Horla blood.
† A golem, a shadow, a creature made by a scientist, a sorcerer.
† A specter.
† A Horla. They have all types of appearances and conscience. Horribly mutilated mammals, humanoid allegoric characters, trees full of evil or good egregore, masses of protoplasmic flesh, coarse demons, fascinating cryptobiologic forms of life.
† A Brother of the Golden Masks.
† A Corax, crow-man metamorph.
† A Varwolf, intelligent wolf wizard, capable of speech, walking on either two or four legs.
† A Mother Sow, disgusting servant of Shub-Niggurath.
† Any other weird creature spawned from egregore, plasms without classification, things made of orgone, fat Ubus avatars of the King in Yellow.
† A Hapt, translucent being from another dimension, starving, mortal.
† An Architect Worm, antediluvian gigantic digging being.
† Any colossal or tiny chimera, barely conscious, with disproportionate powers. Dragons, cyst-spiders, little people.
† A whole ecosystem. Forest, desert, mountain.

If you opt to play a monster, define its specificities, its goal, its potential, at least for yourself. The rules allow you to play anything but they don't give any technical advantage to monsters. Therefore, only choose to play one for the fascination it exerts.



Play a Brother of the Golden Masks

Prehistory: the Cave Massacre

Cro-Magnons and Neanderthals rub shoulders with each other in Africa. Neanderthals are smarter. But they're less strong and reproduce a lot more slowly. Cro-Magnons exterminate them and become the dominant race on Earth. The surviving Neanderthals make the most of their physical resemblance with Homo sapiens to survive among them in clandestinity. The two species are not interfertile.

Modern History

Neanderthals hold many important positions in human society. They are organized in secret lodges, gathered under the name of Brotherhood of the Golden Masks. Nefertiti, Leonardo da Vinci, Cesar Borgia, Empress Cixi, Aleister Crowley, Lady Ada Lovelace and even Albert Einstein are rumored to have been Neanderthals.

1942: the Cambridge conference

Secret reunion of Neanderthals of the whole world. They identify Hitler as the leader of the Black Lodge, a sect which goal is to annihilate the human race. They decide its project is insane and do everything they can to make Germany lose the war.

2190: Lord Aldous Chamberlain elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

He's a Neanderthal, leader of the Cinnabar Lodge, which aims to plunge humankind in stagnation to avenge the Cave Massacre.



2197: The Cinnabar Lodge

Infiltrated in the nationalist movement Neo-Russia, Neanderthals from the Cinnabar Lodge take part in creating a bomb for terrorist purposes. This bomb, named Alexander II, can have a fallout range over the whole European continent. Without the knowledge of their superiors in Neo-Russia, the infiltrated Neanderthals add a mutagen agent to the bomb, which attacks the memorial functions of the Homo sapiens brain.

2198: Lord Aldous Chamberlain seizes several Alexander II missiles.

He secretly equips several airplanes of the Royal Air Force with them.

2200: D-Day, the Day of the Disaster

The relations between European governments and the occupiers are at their worst. There is a crisis meeting on November 22, in a bunker under the Elysée, between Darmancourt, Lord Chamberlain, Gustav Yelking, Seung Kevorkian and William Patterson. This meeting turns into a disaster.

This diplomatic disaster leads to a nuclear blitzkrieg in the following minutes. Nuclear and thermic missiles rain down on Europe, causing, amongst other cataclysms, a seismic and volcanic activity comparable to the Primary Era. Lord Chamberlain drops several Alexander II missiles on Europe. Abject creatures escape from burning genetic laboratories. It's the end of European civilization.

2203: Suicide of Lord Aldous Chamberlain

2220: The Brotherhood of the Golden Masks outlaws the Cinnabar Lodge. Its last members are murdered.

The Brothers, who don't suffer from amnesia, promise to help the humans rebuild civilization, while keeping their existence a secret.

2320: Clandestinely led by the Brothers, human civilization is slowly rebuilt.

It settles around the Tyrants Sea (ex-Mediterranean Sea) on a feudal model. People claiming they are nobles (assuming famous names) hold the reins of power.

2380: Several medieval or early Renaissance great civilizations border each other.

2385: Innocent XVIII, a Neanderthal and leader of the Black Lodge is crowned pope in Rome. He is completely corrupted by Shub-Niggurath.

Contemporary description of the Neanderthals

Neanderthals are special individuals in Milesvale's society. Out of fear of reprisal, they have kept their true nature a secret since the dawn of times. However, their intelligence and their ambition allowed them to hold throughout history positions of great importance in society. And even more so in Milesvale, since they are among the rare keepers of memory. They bear the burden of knowing how Milesvale came into existence, a disaster for which they are strongly responsible.

Neanderthals are a very hierarchical secret society. They aim at careers in politics, the army, the clergy, science, arts or even philosophy.

Their small reproductive capacity has always put their survival at risk. Pregnancies of Neanderthal women last between 9 and 11 months. And it's rare that they give birth to more than one or two children during their life. In spite of measures taken to favor their natality, Neanderthals see their numbers decrease from one generation to the next. Their fertility was more important before the Disaster. But they haven't been spared by mutations from radioactivity and hold. Today, there are 50 times less Neanderthals than Homo sapiens.

The Brotherhood of the Golden Masks

The vast majority of Neanderthals is gathered within the Brotherhood of the Golden Masks, a secret society from the Babylon era. Those who are not part of it are called the Hermits and generally live on the fringe of society.

Each Brother owns a golden mask built according to a magical and alchemical process. If a human were to wear this mask, his face would suffer from atrocious burns.

The Brotherhood of the Golden Masks is subdivided in Lodges. A Lodge represents an ideological position on the best way of living amongst humans. Within each Lodge, voices are opposed on whether brothers must still live in clandestinity or reveal their nature to the world. Some don't belong to any Lodge, they are called Interstitials.

Official Lodges

† **Golden Lodge:** “Humans are stupid beasts and Neanderthals should rule them.”
† **White Lodge:** “Brothers and humans should live in harmony.”
† **Black Lodge:** “ Humans are harmful beasts to be eradicated.”
† **Blue Lodge:** “ Brothers guide humans and make them better.”
† **Brown Lodge:** “Brothers should live their lives without paying attention to humans.” It's the most opportunistic Lodge. Its members do business with all the others Brothers, without any Lodge distinction.
† **Azure Lodge:** “Cohabitation with humans is unsustainable. Brothers must migrate to an ecosystem where they will be the only smart species. Another continent, another planet, another dimension, in space or under the ocean, anywhere else seems more welcoming.”

Endemic Lodges of Milesvale

† **Yellow Lodge:** "Brothers must leave Milesvale before anything else."
† **Green Lodge:** "Brothers of Milesvale must first and foremost manage to contact the Brothers from Outside."

Occult Lodges (which existence is hidden to most Brothers)

† **Ebony Lodge:** "Brothers must first fight against the Horla phenomenon and make Milesvale a more livable place."
† **Amber Lodge:** "Brothers must manipulate Horlas to serve their own interests."
† **Carmine Lodge:** "Brothers must unite with Horlas to wipe out the human race."
† **Cinnabar Lodge:** " Brothers must humiliate the human race."
† **Purple Lodge:** "The Neanderthal race is against nature. It must die out through massive suicide or a progressive hybridization with humans."

The Neanderthal Lineages

Neanderthals are attached to keeping their family tree up to date. Most claim prestigious ancestors. It's often hard to question them. So many archives have been destroyed since D-Day, giving free rein to impostors.

Whether it's right or lying to itself, each Neanderthal Lineage thinks it comes from a famous ancestor from whom it takes its name. A Neanderthal generally puts his Lineage next to his family name when he speaks to another Neanderthal. The Lineage defines a code of conduct, a trade or a common passion related to the original ancestor. Therefore, the Neanderthals from the Da Vinci Lineage are strategists, inventors, artists. The code of the Lineage is in contradiction with the obligations linked to the Lodge. Between their Lodges, their Lineage and their personal history, Neanderthals are neck-deep in a canvas of schemes which would drive a simple human mad. Indeed, all Neanderthals can't withstand it. Suicide, duel, exile, murders... are the usual conclusions of dramatic adventures scattered with conflicts.

Lineage examples

† **Borgia** (mafia, army, politics, clergy)
† **Cagliostro** (esotericism, sorcery, alchemy)
† **Casanova** (politics, seduction)
† **Da Vinci** (sciences, art, army)
† **Dante** (arts, politics, esotericism)
† **Das Faust** (esotericism, army, psychic school of gravity)
† **Machiavel** (politics, army)
† **Magellan** (exploration, army, esotericism)
† **Michelangelo** (arts, seduction)

Neanderthal characters during play

† **Madness:** Torn between several schemes, they can suffer from a strike of temporary insanity or plunge definitely into madness.
† **Memory:** They are immune to oblivion.
† **Nature**: They're mostly urban.
† **Hold:** They know the existence of hold and its role in the mutation of the forest and Horlas.
† **Egregore:** They know the existence of egregore. Many are sensitive to it or master a psychic school using it.
† **Society:** They meddle in human society and hide their true nature. They speak between themselves through code.
† **Clan:** They mostly belong to the Brotherhood of Golden Masks. They own a personalized golden mask and belong to an Official Lodge, maybe even also to an Occult Lodge.
† **Religion:** Many are atheists, all know how to fake being faithful.
† **Science:** They maintain many technological secrets from the Golden Age and are at the cutting edge of endemic technology.
† **Love:** They stay close to their family and Lineage. In love-related matters, most are born to break hearts and be heartbroken. They take great care of their children until their majority.
† **Drives:** Very sensitive to egregore, marked by their history of persecution, they're thin-skinned. Their feelings are outrageous.
† **Flesh:** Although they consider themselves more evolved than humans, they like to test the limits of their body in combat, athletics and sex, among themselves or with humans.



Playing a Corax

Corax are metamorphs. They can change at will into a human, a crow or a human with the head of a crow. The metamorphosis style changes from one Corax to the next, it can be elegant or disgusting. These exceptionally clever beings have meddled with human society. In general, they plot its downfall. Keen on black magic, alchemy, politics and cursed poets, the only thing keeping them from being a serious threat for Milesvale's future is their small number.

A Corax only lives ten years on average. But this handicap is counterbalanced by a great advantage, genealomnesy. When he is born, a Corax inherits the memory of both his parents. As a consequence, he has access to the memories of his remotest ancestors, which makes him an impressive scholar, a very experimented being.

The Corax Ways

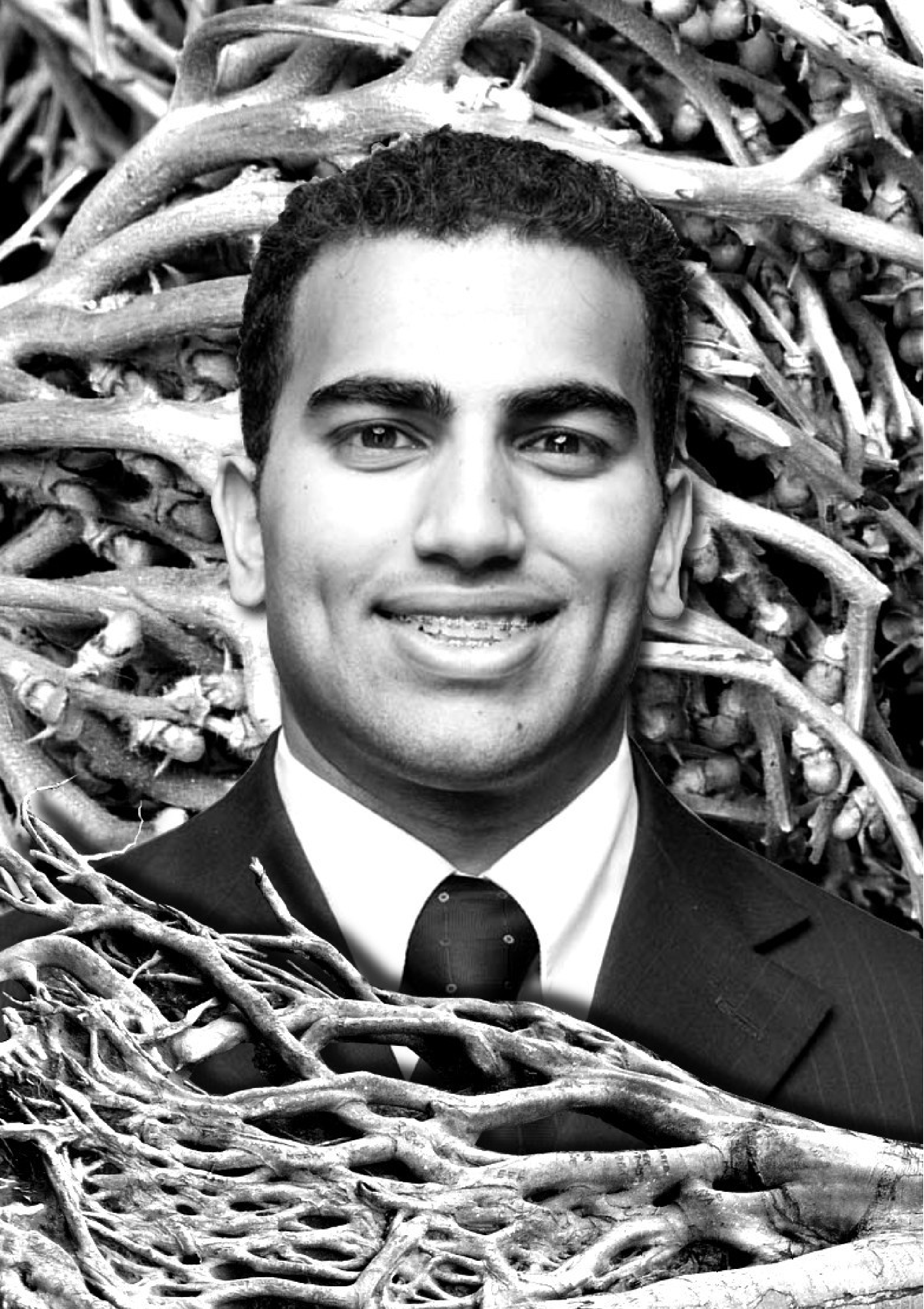
Corax have only existed for two hundred years. They are the result of the magical agitation which engendered Milesvale. They are therefore unsure of what their destiny is. They don't all share the same philosophy. There are several identifiable schools of thought or Ways:

† **The Way of the Crow:** “To take a human form is a sin. To renounce one's animal spirit is a sin. To kill animals to feed is a sin.”
† **The Way of Man:** “The corvid form is a stain. Corax must accept themselves as complete human beings and mix with them. It's a shame humans are so difficult to understand.”
† **The Way of the Black Circle:** “Corax use Animal Black Magic, an intuitive magic. It's neither good nor bad. Fate has decided its use. The question is how to use it.”
† **The Way of Remorse:** “Corax are the result of the Milesvalean abomination. To accept one's condition is a sin. The race is cursed. Nothing good can come from the other Corax. Remorseful Corax must help other species, kill themselves or exterminate the Corax not following the Way of Remorse, unless they can be converted.”

† **The Way of Hate:** “Corax are the omega of consciousness. All other sentient races are inferior and must disappear in the more or less long term. There is no need to show respect to humans, sentient animals, Horlas or Sow Mothers.”
† **The Way of the Animal:** “To think is a sin. Instinct guarantees purity. To talk, to transform, to use magic is a sin.”
† **The Way of Extasy:** “No sane Corax can claim to know his race's fate. The race is too young to know what it must be. First, the habits of all animals and sentient races must be studied. When Corax are more educated than anyone else, they'll be able to determine what they are themselves.”
† **The Way of the Goat:** “Corax are servants of the Black Goat with a Thousand Young. They are its favorite children and must never deny it. To serve Shub-Niggurath is the highest destiny possible. To harm Shub-Niggurath is a capital sin.”

Corax characters during play

† **Madness**: Coherent, but hard to understand. Some are insane and torn by the traumas of their ancestors.
† **Memory:** Genealomnesy gives them a vast knowledge of the past, except about the Golden Age since their species didn't exist at that time.
† **Nature:** They prefer plains and forests. If they live in a city, they always come back to wild places to nest.
† **Hold:** They are the result of hold. They accept it as an inheritance or consider it a stain.
† **Society:** Hidden amongst the humans, they speak the human or crow language.
† **Clan:** Every Corax must choose a Way. Many change Ways depending on what happens during their life.
† **Religion:** They are animists, druidic, atheists or even devouts of Shub-Niggurath or a Horla deity.
† **Science:** They prefer esotericism to science.
† **Love:** They sometimes fall in love with humans. The result of such a union is almost always a simple crow.
† **Drives:** They are completely insensitive or totally passionate.
† **Flesh:** Living or dead bodies fascinate them and sharpen their hunger.



THEATERS

Civilization has not entirely disappeared,
There are kingdoms left to burn down!

Preparing a theater

Playing without preparing a theater is exhilarating. It means diving into the unknown to find something new. But sometimes, you'll prefer to explore a setting prepared in advance, one of Milesvale's obsessional territories.

A theater is one of these territories. It's also a canvas of ongoing themes and schemes. Lastly, it's a text with blanks which mysteries you will solve. It will color play, fertilize the players' imagination, make the most of Milesvale's universe.

The Confidant can either prepare the theater together with the other players or prepare it alone in advance and read it to the players at the beginning of the session. It's important to read the whole theater. **No secrets.**

The theater can come from this chapter or one of Milesvale's universe supplements. To help you create a theater, you can also contact the author by email (thomas.munier.outsider@gmail.com) or by forum (www.terresetranges.net).

You can also create a theater from scratch, starting with your instinctive vision of what a horrific forest folklore can be. To get a complete theater, the best way is to read each theme again and see what the theater looks like for each subject. Players can refer to it when they write down sentences, so the session gets the most of the theater.

To get the most of a theater, you can substitute some themes with variations. In this case, you write a specific theme table and give it to everyone. For each substitute theme, you can offer a list of 12 words related to it, so they can be as usable as the originals. To help you write this 12-words list, you can use the theme with the 12 original themes: word 1 is related to madness, word 2 to memory... **Some substitute themes can be reproduced two or three times.**

If new themes emerge during the session, they can also be integrated to the table on the fly.

Create a brief theater for intimate sessions; create a meticulous theater to delve into the details of the universe or produce a grandiloquent session.



THE MOULD OF OBLIVION

This theater is defined in advance only for three themes out of twelve.

Memory: The characters suffer from a peak of oblivion and will gradually forget all that is dear to them.

Nature: Everything takes place in a dense forest progressively covered with a grey mould. This mould symbolizes the oblivion smothering the characters.

Love: Characters and extras are passionate people. They are very attached to beings, values or things they cherish. When they hate, this hate knows no limit.

Special rule

When a character must sacrifice a sentence, it doesn't mean the character loses one of the elements mentioned in the sacrificed sentence, but that he forgets this element.

Substitute themes

3 themes are replaced with Mould and 3 with Oblivion, for the purpose of getting the most out of these two themes.

3 – 4 – 9 Mould (replaces Nature, Hold and Science):
1 sponge-brain, 2 decrepit flashback, 3 lichen forest, 4 mould invasion, 5 beings covered with mycoses, 6 condemned city,
7 spores exterminator, 8 moss Horla god, 9 blood contaminated by a microscopic mushroom, 10 fossilized cadaver of a loved one,
11 crusade against the lichen, 12 parasitism and withering.

2 – 6 – 11 Oblivion (replaces Memory, Society and Drives):
1 oblivion, 2 flashback, 3 false memory, 4 Horla feeding on memories, 5 tarots of the past, 6 unfulfilled promise, 7 ghost of the past, 8 forgiveness,
9 memory elixir, 10 falling out of love, 11 tattoos about important things to remember, 12 forgetting a vital function.



THE CAMINOS DE SANTIAGO

To create this theater, an overview has been written for each theme of the game.

Madness: Exhaustion, piety, addiction, poisoning. The pilgrims of Santiago are often victims of mystical ecstasy.

Memory: Legend tells of holy water that would give one's memory back. Memory fountains lost in the forest along the Caminos de Santiago. Other waters with unexpected mnemonic effects.

Nature: Wild coasts haunted by casters-away, rocky paths full of pitfalls, dark forests where pilgrims get lost.

Hold: On the side of the road, harbors marked with a shell where mutants pile up, inns where black vegetal hair grow, tunnels under the rooms, towards the forest's putrid entrails.

Egregore: On the road, Horlas take on the form of dead loved ones to attract and attack you.

Society: Dozens of roads lead to Santiago, from Metro, the underground capital of the Frank Lands, to Rift, the city cut in two by the dizzying sides of the Rumble, to Axe-in-Vengeance, the sun fortress, to Pamplona, the fierce Basque enclave. Without mentioning boats from Albion or Granada. All converge towards the Christian port and its basilisk with shell walls and the frame of a boat hull.

Clan: Hidden in the forest, on the lookout near relays or even disguised as pilgrims with a stick and a hat showing a scallop, bandits are everywhere. Demented unfrocked monks, political pariahs or bands of skinners working for the Man who Laughs.

Religion: Why are pilgrims risking death on the haunted Caminos de Santiago? To atone for sins so dark they don't have names? For a lord who doesn't want to go there himself? To be the heralds of a new millenarian faith?

Science: Quads and motorboats ease the way for the most well-off. Fuel is worth more than blood. And on the road, those who have some often carry a piece.

Love: The marmoreal face of a statue of the Virgin seen in prayer, a wedding ring at your finger to remember a lost one, a dark man met on the road. Passion walks next to faith towards Santiago.

Drives: Why is this basilisk in front of the ocean, with shell walls and stained scale glasses, attracting humans like a huge magnet?

Flesh: A strange contagious disease causes the stigmata of Christ.

Substitute themes

4 Horlas: 1 Horla deiety, 2 metamorphosis, 3 Horla-tree,
4 Vegetal monster, 5 demon, 6 Horsane, 7 pack leader, 8 exorcism,
9 mutagen river, 10 sensual Horla, 11 superstition, 12 Horla symbion.

5 Miracle: 1 ecstasy, 2 memory fountain, 3 plant control,
4 Christian necromancy, 5 faith moving mountains,
6 multiplication of bread, 7 micro-heresy, 8 disciples, 9 false miracles,
10 mystical levitation, 11 lethal miracles, 12 laying-on of hands.

7 Bandits: 1 servants of the King in Yellow, 2 false pilgrims, 3 forest people, 4 kidnapping Horlas, 5 white lady, 6 militias, 7 skinners working for the Man who Laughs, 8 illuminated hermits, 9 gunners, 10 scammers,
11 red inn (killer innkeepers), 12 children cripplers.

8 Pilgrims: 1 misunderstood philosopher, 2 forgetting the goal of the pilgrimage,
3 lost,
4 Santiago de Composting, the false Compostela,
5 pilgrimage through limbic forests, 6 battalion in crusade,
7 brotherhood of pilgrims, 8 monks and nuns, 9 losing faith,
10 pursuit of a lover, 11 atheist order of warriors, 12 epicurean pilgrim.



TRE CITTÀ PER MORIRE

A theater for a campaign in three sessions

This theater allows you to develop a campaign full of court schemes, sorcery and swashbuckling in the renascent Italy of Milesvale. It takes place in three sessions, one for each city of the theater, in this order: Florence, Venice, then Rome.

It's better if at least one character is a Corax or a Brother of the Golden Masks. Otherwise, the types of colorful characters described in *Society and Civilization*—Gnomes, Watchers, Sarcomants—also make good heroes for this campaign.

Suggested substitute themes (change depending on the sessions)

3 Corax: 1 Way of Remorse, 2 genealomnesy, 3 crow, 4 Way of the Goat, 5 Way of the Black Circle, 6 Corax infiltrated among humans, 7 Way of the Crow, 8 Way of Man, 9 Way of Ecstasy, 10 Way of Hate, 11 Way of the Animal, 12 human with a crow head.

4 Symbion: 1 Horla parasite, 2 human-mask, 3 vegetal symbiosis, 4 animal parts, 5 animal-object symbiosis, 6 smart city, 7 animal companion, 8 plant-object symbiosis, 9 human-object, 10 human-human, 11 mycelial symbiosis, 12 metamorphosis.

5 Sorcery: 1 haunting, 2 fetish, 3 Horla and Horla deities, 4 enchantment, 5 evil eye, 6 putrid tongue, 7 curses, 8 the Black Goat, 9 invocation, 10 sacrifice, 11 blowback, 12 blood magic.

6 Masks: 1 face theft, 2 mute mask, 3 animal mask, 4 crow mask, 5 magic mask, 6 costume, 7 facial expressions, 8 mirror mask, 9 technological mask, 10 talking mask, 11 wolf, 12 living mask.

7 Comedy: 1 usurpation, 2 promises, 3 Corax, 4 imposture, 5 theater, 6 settings, 7 Brothers, 8 flattery, 9 masquerade, 10 seduction, 11 lie, 12 actors.

8 Rome: 1 the Pope, 2 ruins, 3 ivy, 4 secret debauchery, 5 inquisition,

6 Vatican, 7 nobiliary villas, 8 Catholicism, 9 commerce, 10 minorities,
11 circus games, 12 divine punishments.

10 Venice: 1 Carnival, 2 shadow mouth, 3 Salt Desert, 4 decadence,
5 disguise, 6 Doge's Palace, 7 building the Salt Desert Canal,
8 perverted clergy, 9 ship-owners, 10 Giovanni Sforza, 11 forbidden pleasures,
12 the Agnus Dei.

11 Vengeance: 1 self-destruction, 2 vendetta, 3 overbidding, 4 treason,
5 cursing, 6 allies, 7 enemies, 8 Talion's law, 9 warning,
10 forgiveness, 11 punishment, 12 torture.

12 Florence: 1 Marina “Stiletto” Graschetti, 2 Mud Angels,
3 Enemies of Stendhal, 4 Conspiracy, 5 Horla cult, 6 Guelphs and Ghibellines,
7 Blacks and Whites, 8 The Bonfire of the Vanities, 9 freed City, 10 flowers,
11 Augean stables, 12 orgies.

La Florenza (The country of Florence)

Ex-Italy didn't get its new name from the city of Florence, but from its ecosystem. The climate, hot and humid, has favored the development of plants with luxurious flowers. Italy holds the record of the number of floral species. Many are endemic of its territory. Flowers are used for materia medica, textiles, dyeing factories... and making poisons. The Italian jungle is not less hostile than elsewhere, but it causes an incomparable aesthetic emotion. Many strangers have succumbed to its charm... in all meanings of the word.

La Florenza of 2400, from a cultural, technological and political point of view, has a lot in common with the Italy of the Renaissance. People build powder weapons, haute couture costumes, restore the monuments of the Golden Age, like the Doge's Palace in Venice, the Santa Maria del Fiore cathedral in Florence, or the Vatican in Rome. Art is flourishing but imitates the classics of the Renaissance, without any real innovation yet.

Politically, the territory is divided between several independent principalities. And a few tribal zones around Syracuse and the Alts, like the Ursini tribe, fierce warriors who follow the emblem of the Bear and who are paid by Switzerland to kill any stranger coming close to their frontiers.

Principalities wear themselves out in wars in which only condottieres get richer and up until now, there has been no will of reunificating the whole country.

Carnal Florence
The Red and the Black

Despite the Mediterranean sea having withdrawn, Florence has remained an important port. Every day, dozens of Florentine ships return to sea through the Arno river. And, more importantly, the city is an unavoidable platform of trade by land. Lombard bankers, Frankish mercenaries and Punic negotiators hurry there every day in greater numbers. Florence is a complex city, the place of three divisions: the Republic against Nobility, Sin against Culture, Art against Nature.

The Republic against Nobility

The city is officially a republic but is placed under the tutelage of a Duke (or Podestà). Corporatist factions, families and guilds fight each other to win the favors of this Duke, or topple him. The two major parties are the Gibelines, supporting the Empress of Austria-Hungary, and the Guelphs, supporting the Pope. Within the Guelphs, there are the Whites and the Blacks; the Whites would like Florence to free itself from the Podestà—it would become a true republic but would recognize the authority of the Vatican—; the Blacks, at the contrary, want the Podestà to remain an institution, but disagree on whether to keep Medicis at this position or favor one of his rivals.

In this viper's nest, Florence's most ambitious families play about: the Orsini, the Borgia, the Sforza.

The one captivating everyone's interest is the current Duke, Helicosme of Medicis. He was trained in arms and arts and is a pragmatic and cynical ruler. He is aware of the spasms of the political class and until now, has managed to calm down the most extreme. He wants to distract the factions by focusing the future on foreign policies. The Republic is the only city-state with a civil army, under the rule of a gonfalonier. It gives it military ambition.

Medicis is in favor of getting closer with Al-Andaluz and waging war against Venice; he spares the Pope and the Empress as much as he hates them; in short, he has his hands full. He's a man with otherworldly strength, but conspiracies are wearing him down. He's becoming more and more paranoid, and fears poison and daggers as much as a popular cabal or a revolt of the magistrates.

Sin against Culture

Medicis secretly aims to spread atheism. This way, he hopes to undermine the Vatican's authority and one day unify La Florenza under his banner. That's why he has declared Florence a “freed city”. Art and any licentious practices are allowed there. The treasures of Florentine patrimony have been restored, from the Ponte Vecchio, Boticelli's paintings and Michaelangelo's statues to the city's many palaces.

In a short time, Florence became Europe's cultural capital, but also one of the greatest places for lust and debauchery. Among the most licentious establishments, one can mention the Augean Stables, held by a supporter of Salò's Fascist Republic. It's open to invitation only and the establishment doesn't supply you with staff; it's up to the guests to bring their own playmates.

Augean Stables are in reality... exactly what they pretend to be. With animals. It's up to the guests to decide what to do with them. But excesses are not rare and guests often end up with fractures... or never come back. They also say the Stables welcome Horlas and zealots of the Black Goat. But nothing is for sure, since Medicis has forbidden any justice search of the establishment.

On the opposite side, the organization known as the Bonfire of the Vanities, secretly overseen by the Vatican, is a fellowship of clerks and devouts who denounce the impiety of the Florentines. Based at the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral, the believers of the Bonfire of the Vanity repeat their impassioned sermons, organize processions of whippers, vandalize works of art and push the Florentines to burn everything that represents their sins: rich draperies, masters' paintings or feminine underwear. They are likened to the White Guelphs and the most radical branches of the Catholic clergy, and might very well be making a coup soon, to overthrow the proud Medicis and establish an era of fanatical faith.

Marina "Stiletto" Graschetti, fashionable artist

Marina "Stiletto" has left behind the vogue of classical arts and has become the mistress of Florentine body art, and the darling of avant-garde circles. She only comes out of her workshop based on a covered bridge to organize happenings, odes to sensuality and anticonformism.

Recently, a patron as wealthy as he is anonymous has offered her to perform in a place kept secret, in the middle of the forest. There would be nudity and mating with plants.

The offer seduces Marina's cupidity and curiosity. Yet, she fears things could go out of control. Beforehand, she'll pay mercenaries to investigate and perhaps protect her if she accepts...

Art against Nature

Biological colonization has not spared Florence. Medicis spends astronomical amounts to destroy inflorescent creepers, mosses and vermin which invade the city from the forest. He's financing a society which restores damaged monuments: the Mud Angels. They are confronted to the sabotages of the Enemies of Stendhal. This secret society has branches all over La Florenza. In its eyes, art and other human works are an insult to the beauty of nature... Therefore, it has begun to destroy them, in favor of fauna and flora.

Region: the Salt Desert

To talk about the principality of Venice, one must first mention the largest part of its territory: the Salt Desert.

When the Adriatic Sea emptied itself, just like the Tyrants Sea, Venice's laguna completely dried up. Only salt remained. What was once a vast hydraulic network is now a bleak expanse, under a cloudless sky, salt-white as far as the eye can see. Reverberation, the ground's sterility, venomous insects have almost banned all vegetation and made the Salt Desert a very dangerous region to cross.

That doesn't mean encounters are rare there. The ancient islands of Murano and Burano are small green hills. Those who flee from hold take shelter there. Wreck searchers, bandits on the run, hermits cross the desert from end to end, sometimes meeting large convoys bringing merchandise from Venice to the port built on the Adriatic's new limits.

The arid frontiers of the Serene accommodate a whole shady suburb. Salt farms, dens of thieves, receivers' warehouses.
The most known building of this suburb is the Reef Tavern, a washed-up upside down liner. It has become the favorite inn of condottieres and their bands of mercenaries, as well as the armigers offering themselves to the highest bidder.

Mortal Venice
The New Serene

For two hundred years, Venice has been on dry docks. The laguna's waters have deserted the canals, revealing the petrified wood of its foundations. Under the Rialto or the Bridge of Whispers, sand, dried out sludge. Everywhere, washed-up gondolas and motorboats, useless. Venice, which was supposed to die drowning, is dying of dehydration. For that matter, the city had completely been deserted before D-Day. It's only in 2280, when a port was built 20 kilometers from it, where the Salt Desert meets the Adriatic Sea, that Venice established itself again as a lively place, a place of trade and schemes. The first Doge, Dante Berlusconi, had been ousted from Florence's throne. Out of vengeance, he and a few accomplices decided to make Venice its enemy sister.

Saint-Marc's Place, the Bridge of Whispers, the Rialto and many other monuments were restored by miserables to whom fortune was promised. Their skeletons were used to reinforce the foundations. Another important work site was the canal that would connect Venice to its coastal port. Started thirty years ago, this ambitious undertaking is the cause of many political quarrels.

The city's institutions draw their inspiration from the Renaissance. Venice is an oligarchy revolving around the Grand Council, an assembly of a thousand patricians who elect the Doge for life. The current Doge, Bartolomeo d'Alhambra, is a great lover of Venice. A little less of its inhabitants. It was thanks to him that the frescos of the Titian and Veronese were restored at the Doge's palace, and that commercial trade started again with Carthage and the Ottoman Empire, turning Venice into the European door to Orient.

Without announcing it publicly, he's slowing down work on the canal through the desert. He's criticized by the Council of Ten for it. This institution is a counter-power that can destitute the Doge if he acts against the interests of the Serene; they did it for a previous Doge, going as far as to erase his name from the history books. Bartolomeo d'Alhambra knows the Venetian population will explode once the canal is finished, and wants nothing less that the depopulation of the Serene. He dreams Venetians would leave the city, leaving it to die alone in its restored splendor. He keeps this project to himself, since it could get him a few knives in the back... Among his fiercest political opponents is Giovanni Sforza, Duke of Pisa, former condottiere, Neanderthal of the Golden Lodge and bloated by ambition. Sforza is a candidate for the Doge's succession, campaigns for the canal, preaches war against Florence; he is a member of the Borgia Lineage and to achieve his goals, he's bent on applying the practices associated to his name...

The people of Venice are kept away from those political considerations, but they're the Serene's real motor. Whether they busy themselves on shipyards, work on the markets of the covered bridges or beg on Saint-Marc's Place. But their only official participation to political life is through the shadow mouths, urns disseminated throughout the city. Anyone can put denunciations in it. Curiously, since this system has started, illiteracy has decreased in the city.

Venice is also a den of sarcomants. Here, you can buy a face like you would a mask elsewhere.

Giuseppe Marcotti, building contractor

Giuseppe's schedule is full until the end of the year. His building company, specialized in the renovation of formerly flooded cellars, flourishes. Whether it is for the installation of a covered market, loggias for fashionable courtesans, forging workshops or housing quarters, it's always Giuseppe who is called first. He knows how to do business and keeps two members of the Council of Ten on his side, who give him building permits. As long as he doesn't make public the compromising pictures he has of them. He also knows how to negotiate with the mafia; everything goes smoothly. “You'd be surprised to see the network of secret passages I installed from one cellar to the next,” he often jokes while eating clam spaghettis on Saint-Marc's Place. Passages between houses of bishops and brothels, occult forges for alchemists and crypts used as churches for black masses... That being said, Giuseppe sometimes thinks he should eat a little more pastas and keep his mouth shut a lot more.

The Agnus Dei, Europe's best restaurant

Located in a palazzio by the Great Canal, this luxurious establishment attracts gourmets from all nations. In his youth, King Arthur himself is said to have risked his life by crossing the Frank Lands and the Alts to savor its best dishes. At least, that's what Vitello Manzeleini, the owner, says; looking like a retired tenor, he treats his guests with stories as much as sophisticated food. Manzeleini is said to have been to the four corners of the continent to bring back the rarest ingredients. A true lover of Milesvale, he got the best of its decadent biodiversity to arrange an adventurous and lucullian cuisine.

On the menu:

† Carpaccio of eels candied in sap of ghoul-pine tree, with its litter of stuffed pigrelets.
† Rumen of noctohyena stuffed with pesto of red lichen on its bed of still alive Corax nestlings.
† Black meat in lace of algae and its brains of land shrew cooked in honey.
† Tiramisù of carnivorous rose and weevil, sprinkled with yellow opium.
† As a side order: Lacryma Christi del Vesuvio, beer of psilocybin & the chef's espresso with its spiral tree whipped cream.

Eternal Rome
Rome wasn't destroyed in a day

American General Yupanqi O'Sullivan, tasked with massive destruction strikes during D-Day, entered History under the nickname of Mister Apocalypse due to an obvious lack of moderation in his offensive approach. However, he had second thoughts when it came to atomizing Rome and calculated strikes so the explosion's blast would spare the 7 Hills and historical Rome (4% of the modern city's surface). The remaining 96% and a zone of a 200 km radius were vitrified.

Milesvale's reborn Rome established itself in this historical Rome, around miraculously preserved monuments like the Coliseum, the Forum, Castel San Angelo, the Vatican. Inhabitants have settled in vegetalized ruins, favoring restoration or adjustment to new constructions.

Rome is a theocracy, under the Pope's direct authority, in the Vatican. It's also the capital of the Pontificate States, covering the whole south of La Florenza and Sicily, even if the latter shows a strong desire for independence.

The current Pope, Innocent XVIII, practices on the city of Rome a totalitarian hold. He wants people to dedicate a cult of personality to him, picks the leaders of judiciary and legislative power, and has an all-powerful intelligence service, the High Congregation of Strict Observance, which carries out spying missions in all the layers of society, tapping all "sensitive" personalities. Swiss Guards take care of his personal protection and also serve as a militia in Rome, while provosts maintain order in the Pontificate States.

The Vatican doesn't have a permanent army but has the means to hire mercenary armies. The Pope can also declare a Holy Crusade and assemble under his banner all Christian kings, lords and knights... who answer the call. Innocent XVIII has several crusade plans, including some against Carthage and the Ottoman Empire. But he first wants to smother the antipopes' schism and reinforce his influence on the mighty of Europe. Personalities as spectacular as Arthur Pendragon, Alexandra the Catholic and Wilhelmina of Austria have sworn allegiance to him, but it's only a promise on a scroll of parchment for now. Innocent XVIII very much hopes to dedicate all his energy, his intelligence and his cruelty to restore the Church's supremacy. But for now, the Pontificate States could still suffer from war. Thirty years ago, barbarians from the Balkans had carried out deadly raids up to the very doors of the Capitol.

The other driving force of the Vatican is the Tribunal of Holy Inquisition. By reforming this institution, Innocent XVIII duly notes the return of demonic possession and heresies. He wants to standardize the methods of fighting it in Europe. He doesn't have much control over the Inquisitors he sends out of Florence for now, but his hold on the Inquisition is complete within the Pontificate Sates and many faithful suffer the question there. Innocent XVIII is quick to use this Tribunal as a tool for condemning his political enemies and protecting those possessed by Horlas.

Romans live in terror but economy is flourishing. The Vatican encourages maritime commerce, the military industry, the recapture of technology and sacred art.

Important non-Christian communities are even tolerated within the city walls of the Pontificate States. Some think the Pope keeps under his hat populations to racket, future scapegoats. Or is preparing a genocide. Measures are already being taken to limit freedom of religion. For instance, the Central Mosque of Rome is the only place where muslims are allowed to pray. It's also the Embassy of Mede Kingdoms.

In spite of its dreary aura, Rome remains the diplomatic city *par excellence*. Many international treaties are signed within its walls. But the hardening of the regime might turn away ambassadors in favor of Florence or Barcelona, cities which are more tolerant and just as prestigious.

Abbott Solenius of Syracuse, ecclesiastic in love with good food

Abbott Solenius deeply loves God. But he loves just as much good food and concupiscent ephebes. Starting recently, the Inquisition has put its nose everywhere, ending the good times. Solenius doesn't dare leaving his Roman villa. Its external walls are austere, interspersed with gloomy statues of the Stations of the Cross, but the inner court is where the most joyful Roman orgies take place. By day, the beautiful church located in the outer wall welcomes the faithful through its outer door. By night, it welcomes drunk lovers through its inner door.

Solenius knows he cannot keep this ruse working forever. He plans on moving to Florence, where parishioners are less dull. But the trip seems quite long and perilous. He'd have to find traveling companions to make his journey safe. And if possible, not unsavory characters...



THE HIGHWAY OF TEARS

A sad and shamanic road-movie in the vast forests of the Great North

Essentials

Nowadays. Throughout the Canadian forest, a never-ending road. Young Amerindians are hitchhiking. Disappearances. A sad and shamanic road-movie in the vasts forests of the Great North.
What happened to those who disappeared? Will they be found? Who's responsible? Whether you're a loved one of one of the missing, a road user, with the police searching the premises, a volunteer organizing searches, a hitchhiker, an inhabitant of the forest, an Indian surviving in misery or even one of those pariahs roaming in the region… the road won't spare you.

Credits

Consultant and co-author: Vermer
Testers: Anaïs, 6 anonymous, Angel, Dimitri, Nelson, Pierre, Raphaël, Stéphane, Vianney, Zac
Proofreaders of the French version: Jérôme "Sempaï" Bouscaut, Yoann Calamai, Julien Delorme, Arjuna Khan, Pao le Sage, Maud Rossi
This text was first published in the magazine *Di6Dent*.

References

Playlist:
http://bit.ly/2iWz3vv

Filmography:
Blueberry
In the Electric Mist
Dead Man
Insomnia
Memories of Murder
Mulholland Drive
Zodiac

Web:
The killer of the Highway of Tears:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highway_of_Tears_murders/
Killer Robert Pickton :
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Pickton
The Indian road-movie *Smoke Signals* :
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smoke_Signals_(film))

Intent

The Highway of Tears is real. Its name comes from a sordid story. The fate of those young people saddens me. I shiver to think about what exactly happened to them, what we don't know. This theater is made for being played but is also a tribute to the victims.

Atmospheres

1 Heaviness, human misery, lost truth.
2 Police investigation, identifiable culprits.
3 Oneirism, shamanism.
4 Slices of life.
5 Shady elements. What exactly happened to the hitchhikers, what will happen again? What if victims or bodies are found?
6 Magic realism. Some people blame demons, others humans of flesh and blood.

1 The road

Facts

Vancouver. A thriving city, except for members of the First Nations living there. Some are very well integrated, but many, especially young people, live in poverty, sometimes in drug and prostitution.

Leaving Vancouver, you go through the province of **British Columbia**, a **large and straight** highway, **imperturbable, an open wound in the forest**. It's typical of North America: there are no guardrails or safety barriers. It's not visited much: only by the rare natives with vehicles, civil servants, forest industries, bikers and truck drivers who drive through America in monsters on wheels.

On the road, Indian reservations. Lake Camp has several shops, a motel and a native police station.

On the side of the road, a few isolated houses, motels and gas stations.
Signs. A woman hitchhiker is featured on them. It's written: "It's not worth it." In the mist, menacing headlights. It's a **warning.**

Disappeared people are mostly young natives. They don't have any public transportation nor vehicles. To go to town or visit their families, they have to hitchhike. And they're never heard from again. Dozens of disappearances on the Highway of Tears, maybe thousands across the whole Province. A quasi-genocide.

Chumani Shelter, **the highway godmother**. She's a fifty-year-old Sioux woman, with an obese and aged body. Stigmata of a sedentary lifestyle. But she has a strong will. She paces the road driving a 4x4 covered with posters featuring the faces of the disappeared. She searches for the disappeared and warns about safety. She takes refuge in spirituality to maintain hope.

Rumors

† Warning campaigns only increase the problem. Because of egregore, the more people believe the road is dangerous, the more it becomes so.
† Chumani Shelter is not what she claims to be.

2 The forest

Facts

The forest is being neglected. Giant trees. Caverns, lakes, rivers. Sheds and refuges. Hunters, lumberjacks, civil servants, hikers and non-conformists.

For young natives, the forest is good, it's their cultural element. They dream of hunting, fishing, harvesting and camping. Reestablishing the link with what little is left of nature and their traditions.

Rumors

† Unauthorized garbage dumps, also serving as mass graves.
† A conspiracy to drive the natives away and exploit a forest resource.
† The forest is becoming magical, for better or for worse.
† It's the forest or one of its monsters which took them.
† What if the natives had once offended nature and were paying for it today?
† What if these disappearances were a payback for the generosity natives had benefited from in the past?
† What if, to pay for past spectacular hunts, they were now the game?
† Or if the forest was the only possible cure against this slaughter?

3 The natives

Nations

Three important nations:
The **Cree** profess integration, they have created a **mixed race people**. They have kept their writing made of symbols.
The **Ojibwa** have conceded a lot since the Europeans arrived, progressively giving away their lands. They seem resigned.
The **Sioux** (Lakota, Dakota, Nakota) were magnificent in the past but paid a heavy toll during the Indian wars (Little Big Horn, Wounded Knee) and were acculturated. They are still angry today.

Many also have Afro-American blood.

The natives have Anglo-Saxon or Indian first names, related to their qualities, their life, their birth, nature, supernatural forces.
Women (Meaning, Nation): Abey (Leaf, Sioux), Angeni (Angel, Ojibwa), Migina (Moon, Sioux), Winona (First Born, Sioux).
Men: Chayton (Falcon, Sioux), Kwanita (Good Spirits, without nation), Tyee (Chief, Chinook), Wakiza (Warrior, without nation).

Facts

Poverty is important in the reservations. There are many children and not enough to feed them. There are also very prosperous families: wealth and education are not divided equally.

Social help is inappropriate to cultural and familial structures. Grandparents and uncles often raise the children, but social services allocate the help to parents, often absent, whom they consider as the people in charge.

Young natives have problems of identity, drug and alcohol. Some have suffered from sexual and familial violence, others have social difficulties because of prenatal exposure to alcohol. To face difficulties, some choose to withdraw into themselves. **But most rely on their spirituality and their community spirit.**

Elders are visited to give advice and raise people's morale. Communities quickly stand together, a solidarity organized by women. There is a strong **support of families**, quick to be put in place, they are visited, people help them out.

Rumors

† They say the young have disappeared on their own will.
† The culprits are relatives who are putting the blame on highway killers.
† The eldest of a family sell themselves to keep the youngest free from want. What, precisely, do they sell of themselves? It's better not to know.
† Natives make other natives disappear so the government increases helps to the community.
† A native denying his roots is responsible for the disappearances.

4 The police

Facts

In Canada, three police forces are working on the disappearances, not always hand in hand:
† Provincial police. It doesn't like having to delegate power to the other police forces.
† The Royal Police Force of Canada (or Mounted Police), with federal powers. It investigates traffics or serial killings.
† Native police, on reservations. Their responsibility stops when the case covers a large territory or involves blood crimes, but some native cops are tenacious.

Other agencies can get involved through police action on the environment, social matters and frauds.

Rumors

† Some cops have turned finding the truth into a personal matter.
† Others are responsible for the disappearances.
† Others attack survivors when they come to press charges.
† Violent policemen cover each other.
† Natives form secret police forces to investigate the disappearances.
† The empathist: a cop feeling other people's emotions, who feels empathy for victims and executioners, who is trying to build a nonviolent judicial system.

5 Shamanism

Facts

Many share modern traditions close to the cultures of prairie Indians.
Smudging consists in purifying one's emotions with smoke, sage or tobacco. It's done before important events. Even in board meetings in grand hotels; before starting the video projector, fire alarms, cellphones and computers are turned off, people purify themselves with smoke.
The pipe ceremony clears the mind.
For a greater awakening, one stays in a **sweat lodge**. Trance, vision, possession.
The very secret dance of the sun, never filmed, forbidden for a long time, sometimes with ritual piercings of the flesh, represents the dancer's sacrifice and identity.

Dreams and visions guide the natives.

At the window, a dream catcher. Only its owner can touch it. It captures nightmares in its nets.

Anyone can practice rituals, but people follow the elders' wisdom for crucial ceremonies.

Rumors

† The victims were chosen because they were young and members of the First Nations, to be used in a grand scale shamanic ritual.
† Nightmares are invading the world.
† Sweat lodges and sun dances open a door to other worlds.
† In the middle of the forest, a mysterious *inukshuk*, stacking of stones in the shape of a man. What is this Inuit construction doing beyond the Arctic Circle?

6 Predators

Disappearances means predators. Is only one person responsible for those hundreds or thousands of disappearances? A person of flesh and blood?

Rumors

† Every time, it's a different maniac who does it. The isolation of this large road gives them impunity to do so.
† A single author. He began by killing six women in Vancouver. Murders were attributed to the farmer Robert Pickton, but the real murderer is still at large, and it's him who bleeds the whole Province.
† Human traffic on an industrial scale.
† Humans corrupted by pollution attack those young people from another culture, whom they don't understand since they are outside the world's technological modernity.
† Oblivion. The young want to forget themselves and disappear from this modern world in ruins, to rediscover their ancestors and the world of their forgotten traditions.
† Hold. All life changes. And not always for the best.
† Egregore. Fears and beliefs become reality.
† Horlas. Ambushed Sasquatches, cannibal Wendigos, macabre Banshees.



SKIN AND MEMORY

Postulate

The characters wander on the surface of a run-down Paris, looking for their lost memories.
To fill the void, or to understand how to fulfill an ongoing quest. They have a lot of questions, and the answer lies... in tattoos.

Theme table

	Symbol	Examples
1	**Forest**	1 game 2 predator 3 tree 4 arborescence 5 ruins 6 shadows
2	**Memory**	1 testimony 2 belief 3 lie 4 oblivion 5 offering 6 void
3	**Hold**	1 degenerescence 2 stain 3 fertility 4 social corruption 5 bestiality 6 metamorphosis
4	**Egregore**	1 legends 2 specters 3 sorcery 4 Horlas 5 strong emotions 6 bonds of fate
5	**Tattoos**	1 alchemy 2 sarcomancy 3 tarots 4 erasure 5 passage-patterns 6 texts
6	**Flesh**	1 beauty 2 passion 3 disease 4 death 5 pain 6 mutilation

Offering: the action of paying with a memory
Void: a sensation of pain and withdrawal due to amnesia
Sarcomancy: the art of modeling human flesh with sarcomantic fluid
Passage-patterns: some tattoo patterns are said to be passages to memories
Tarots: There are two Tarots of Marseilles, the one than predicts the **future** and the one that predicts the **past**

Banishment

Metro's judiciary system is simple. To each crime its punishment. Whether you're charged with pillage, rape or murder, some big shot from the sewers or provost from the catacombs dislikes you, whether you catch a contagious disease or you're the scapegoat of a community, you'll suffer the same fate. You'll be tied up, lead by dozens of vengeful arms to a manhole or an entrance of the Metropolitan and will be abandoned on the Surface. The punishment is deemed efficient. You won't take up too much vital space anymore. Those who were banished rarely come back underground. They are shot on sight and their bodies are sent back to the Surface.

The Surface

Paris is a fortress of silence. It's always cold. Thousands of pieces of papers snow in its streets. Press cuttings from the Golden Age, burnt parchments, inane poems. Relics scattered by the wind? Horla joke? Fragments from parallel versions of Paris? This snow gives explorers a violent urge to reconstitute the puzzle. Only one is said to have done it and been driven mad and wandering by it. Woe betide who would try to meet him to learn the truth.

The Surface is becoming forest-like again. The Montparnasse Tower, the Sacré-Cœur, Notre Dame are used as nests by birds of prey and finish their agony in the bushes, rarely disturbed by the visit of roeburks. The Lumpy Vein flows with no boat on its surface.

An unconscious explorer could think the Surface is an oasis of calm. Walking through the ruins in the calmest of calms. Until a demented banished looms from a shadow, armed with a surgical saw. Or one of these Fomori, creatures with an orange and translucent skin, a doll face and a face of torture, eyes pierced with nails, who drags him in its large claws to somewhere else, somewhere no one ever came back from.

A huge reflection blinds us at the center of this desolation. The Eiffel Tower has lost its last floor. It's covered in tinfoil, supposed to make it invisible to the Fomori. Inside, the banished have gathered. They survive as tribes, in total deprivation. They live there by day and go hunting at night, terrified. The irony is that the banished, victims of Metro's unjust system, have reproduced it in their Eiffel Tower tribes, since the best hunters live at the top and the weakest pile up in the lowest floors, at the mercy of the Fomori.

The oracle of oblivion

"From the ashes of beings they make infusions, the memory of water does the rest. Piranha-drink, bathtub for murderers, grieving river."

11 Using villages as sedentary memory: coming back to a community;
memories are deformed, going to a community, people think they recognize you, want you to marry Denise because you saved her father's life, supposedly
12 Memory smugglers are Gnomes with important mnemonic capacities, charges with carrying crucial information, from one city to another.
Often, the information takes up so much memory space that the Gnome has to sacrifice his own memories to welcome it, or fuse it with his memories
13 Innkeepers stealing your memories in your sleep: with a net above your mouth to capture the dreams leaving it
14 The sarcomancian grafts you the tattooed skin of strangers;
as a result, their memories and emotions, still warm, flow through your veins.
15 Mosquitos injecting false memories, trees constantly calculating, networked roots, organic data. A forest with cellular memory.
16 Oblivion contributes to hold. It's not just an hereditary flaw.
It's a recurring, curable, contagious mutation. Black hole.
21 I have the power to read dreams and thoughts, but each time it costs me a memory. Sad tit for horrible tat!
22 I'd say 'tis wrong to sleep with one's own mother.
But it turns your memory and egregore upside down... I'm telling you.
23 You can forget faces, stories, promises. You can live without that.
But the worst is elsewhere. The worst is forgetting yourself.
24 Remedies destroying bodies and minds. These memories swelling into permanent migraines. Others dying. Memory cancer.
25 When you forget everything, you investigate on your past all the time.
You investigate on everyone, you search for lost links. An era of gossips.
26 I have eczema on my elbow. Why? Was it a bad memory?
A sorcerer must have stolen it to feed his magic: good manna for him.
31 These young people I meet on the road are my children.
It reassures me, moves me, and with luck it might be true.
32 You say I remember it happens like this, you change your memory with each version. The past is a tree you deface all the time.
33 A jumble of nested memories, mazes of the past, getting lost in conjectures, the man who saw the man who saw the bear.
34 You've done everything to find it again, stratagems and spells.
Now you're alone with it. And you're already regretting it. Alone with your memory.
35 At the memory market. Proust madeleines, birthday cakes, wine of sorrow, regurgitated banquets, Host of forgiveness, first teeth.
36 Sour tannins, aromas of nascent death, murky visions on the surface,
doubt infusion, ceremony of anecdotes. The black tea of memory.

41 Diagram of photos, walls of post-its, canopy of red strings,
tormented thoughts. A forest of suspicions.
42 Objects capture memories. You can read the past on the lines of one's hand. Psychosomatism stores in your body what you don't want to forget. An alchemy of smells bringing back memories.
43 Lost in the paths of my stillborn fates, the forest of if-onlies,
haunted by these dear faces missed by a hair's breadth. Dead-ends.
44 This moment when you finally move aside the branches of lies to see the real reality, you've looked so much for it. It's going to hurt you so much.
45 I steal memories, identities, pasts. I remove this mask from your face to see
in the mirror the face it gives me and forget my void.
46 We're mandated to the worst places to find back
what should never have disappeared. We're the memory warriors.
51 No compass or map could have been of any help.
I'm losing myself in this forest because my memory plays tricks on me. A part of me betraying myself.
52 There was this traffic with the dead's ashes. They were sniffing it or made
diamonds with it. Their own memory, soul, reduced to ashes.
53 With all our strength, everyday, achieving feats, good deeds,
atrocities so we are remembered, so we remember ourselves.
54 It's so heavy not to understand one's burden.
So heavy to carry on with all of your sloughings on your back. So heavy to be, to have been.
55 The blast! Everything implodes in your head, your body, big moment pain vertigo nightmare where the reality of the buried world appears in broad daylight!
56 The one who steals tales to put them in books or buys them
for a bottle, a gold nugget that ruins the teller's life.
61 Swimming. The ocean is only oblivion, consoling from everything.
The grand tide of dreams, of lost hopes, finally being washed off one's heavy past.
62 It looks like the quest of a lifetime to reassemble one's memory.
But on the day you face your truth, will you be ready to fight it?
63 These vats contain clones of you in different pasts.
They will come out one day to give you questions and answers.
64 Oblivion is void, the absence of memory. Dizziness: our feeling when facing the Void. The call of the void. The opposite of vertigo.
65 Some are fascinated by the fact of forgetting and want to forget as many things as possible, to start from scratch.
65 —Who knocked on the door? To whom were you talking to?
—No one. —No one?
—Just a ghost from the past...
66 There were this hotel's ruins...
Each room led you to a memory of your past.
Did it really exist? What if...



CLAY

A theater by Julien Delorme
(text in public domain)

Clay is somewhere north of Rift, on an important road leading to Santiago. It's a haven for pilgrims in the middle of a heavily deserted region. The city is troglodyte, dug in clay caverns. Rare buildings subsist on the surface, where an intense trade is organized between the tramps who wander on the roads and those living there.

Madness: Troglodyte life causes retrovertigo and all sorts of disturbances and diseases: skin diseases, hypersensibility to light, agoraphobia or claustrophobia, desire or fear of solitude.

Memory: Have the pilgrims already been through here? Have they left traces, messages, encounters? A man stores the messages people leave to themselves, but most forget they exist.

Underground: As people flock into the city, the ground is dug even deeper. Unless some are coming back from the deep? Some passages are barely dug while others are worn out by time. Sometimes, you end up in an enormous cave, where a lake stagnates, sometimes the street becomes a vent you must snake in and out from.

Horlas: What hides inside the earth, chthonian spirits coming alive in the mud and shadow, scary shadows, gigantic worms digging their own galleries, the deeper the strata, the more aberrations there are, born from the fears of men.

Religion: There are often opposing cults, religious controversies. Many pilgrims meet here when they halt and fall victim to usurpers and perverted cults. Deeper below, underground powers and the earth-mother are venerated in uterus-chapels. Among the traders, the cult of the King in Yellow is spreading. Ungodly ceremonies mix with personal versions of the Christian rite. Faith doctors, long-standing citizens, are fighting against the dark influences. Who prays to these twisted idols one sees here and there?

Society: How can one run such a city? Brotherhoods, municipal authorities, infiltration of cults and the power of money...

Bandits: Plentiful commerce brings its lot of bandits: stripping off the pilgrims, cons with holy relics, disappearances of the weakest and most isolated, hidden caches in remote galleries, the shadows help them springing into action.

Pilgrims: Many, lost, sometimes organized in a brotherhood, pilgrims abound in this hub to where several roads lead. It's also a chance to meet again after having lost sight of one another on the road; or to make new enemies. The pilgrimage turns into a competition: who will go the fastest?

Commerce: Here, pilgrims give up their belongings. They sell what was picked up on the road, what is extracted from underground. Mines and excavations in buried dumps: everything that the earth gives is sold in a huge tent market, on the surface, not far from the gapings allowing entrance to the city and the upper levels.

Insane urbanism: Everyone builds individually, everyone digs his own gallery, carves his habitat. Sometimes, one encounters abandoned halls or a lasting construction, after having wandered for a long time, sliding passages, where the air is rarer, catacombs or a mushroom farm. In the upper levels, there's luxury and abundance: hangings hiding the streaming walls, the gleam of many lamps and the strong smell of the concentrated crowd. You're either in a tight spot (too many people, small passages) or all alone.

Drives: The need to come back to the surface or to burrow oneself at the deepest of the mines, lust desires, or the delirious want of accumulating wealth. Morbid behaviors, devouring hungers, engulfing of the earth.

Flesh: Promiscuity is permanent: you live with the others, bodies pressed against bodies, in the bodily and excrement stenches, precarious hygiene in the deeps. Numerous skin diseases, albinism and hypersensibility.

1 Madness:
Hallucinations, claustrophobia, anxiety of the deeps, fear of burial, disorientation, haunting, fear of light, shadows coming to life, being one with the city, total solitude, menacing echoes pronouncing dark threats, perturbed senses.

2 Memory:
The road to get back, divination, Oblivion syndrome, shared memories, sensation of déjà-vu, old holds, bonds, genealogy, total amnesia, vengeance, testimony, false hopes, lie.

3 Underground:
Clay, shadows, noises in the deeps, labyrinthine entanglements, underground source, steep stairs, tight tunnels, improbable crossroads, luminescent mushrooms, blind animals, albinos, silent water stretch, digging deeper and deeper, very strong smells.

4 Horlas:
Metamorphosis, golems, Horsanes, mud creatures, inhabitants of silent lakes, mutant populations, living shadows, festering, superstitions, possessions, mental tortures, unspeakable pacts.

5 Religion:
Ecstasy, resurrection, faith moving mountains, false miracles, cult of the King in Yellow, underground chapels, twisted idols, cabalistic signs, opposing sects, uterus-chapels, chthonian ceremonies, ungodly cults.

6 Society:
City, state, morale, feudality, laws, war, anarchy, outside, authority, journey, philosophy, people.

7 Bandits:
False pilgrims, forest people, inhabitants of the deeps, thieves, kidnappers, ritual abductions, conmen, child maimers, mad preachers, disappearances, gratuitous abuse, sadists, pared-downs.

8 Pilgrims:
Lost, brotherhood of pilgrims, monks and nuns, losing faith, following a lover, epicurean pilgrim, breaking one's vows, remembering a previous passage, act of faith, opposing groups, signs of passage, messages and communications along the road.

9 Commerce:
Point of passage, trading fake relics, exotic merchandise, abundance, currencies, barter, gleaming dispensaries, street peddlers, toll, conmen and smooth talkers, everything is bought and sold, food, permanent market, raw materials extracted from underground.

10 Insane urbanism:
Big crowds in tight spaces, stairs, narrow hallways, urbanized cave, gleaming lightings, underground cemetery, packed public places, improbable lodgings, a maze of passages, shortcuts dug by hand, losing one's bearings, giant market on the surface.

11 Drives:
Pride, greed, luxury, envy, sloth, gluttony, anger, prudence, temperance, justice, courage, unconscious.

12 Flesh:
Fight, sex, beauty, promiscuity, skin diseases, putrefaction, death, bestiality, athleticism, hunger, pain, mutilation.



NORTH, UNDER THE SILENT STARS

A theater by Julien Delorme
(text in public domain)

Far north is a village, said to be the last one before the ice. Its inhabitants live in perpetual winter, nights last ten months and no one prays to the sun, too weak to grant any wishes. How can one survive between two curses of the forest and frost, if not by taking refuge in obsessions, to avoid thinking about the limit, the place where the forest stops and old legends of the past live?

There's a road leading to the village, but none going away from it. It's the end of the road, the terminus. Farther ahead, the forest goes on for a bit, towards the north, but it's said to abruptly stop, brought down by the ice. No one goes north. It's the land where insane ones get lost, the ones who think they can escape the trees.

It's also the land of old legends, the ones men have forgotten and which the people of the village are the last to remember. In these lands, Horlas take strange forms: the old man in red who enslaves children in his ice palace, foxes who seduce humans, etc. Only a few have seen them, but old Orlof has kept from his encounter with the Snow Lady a black and swollen tongue, said to be still frozen.

Here, nights last ten months. People make the best of things and worship the few rays of light given by the constellations and the moon. Prayers are sent to them. People like silver, it's the metal of celestial things, it's melted to make round statuettes or constellations-shaped pendants.

It's been a long time since the sole god ruling the region has left and has no more powers. People have turned to their natural protectors, the animals. The village has four shamans who are the village's moral and religious authority. Each has a ritual costume and is at the service of the inhabitants, in one of the four refuges. When someone becomes a shaman, she completely loses her identity, her family relations and her face. Subsequently, no one must refer to what the person was before, or see her features.

† **Shaman Reindeer** is the village's protector. He distributes food, looks after the herds' fertility, and gives fodder to the beasts. He presides over agricultural matters. He predicts fates with runes. He lives in the mud hut to the west of the village.
† **Shaman Wolf** is the head of hunters. He brings back provender when herds are weak and food needs to be found elsewhere. He's the master of snares and the protector of the villagers. Horlas are afraid of him, he knows how to track them down. He lives in the log house to the east of the village.
† **Shaman Owl** protects women and children. He's also the village's doctor. He's the one who knows, who teaches. He knows the herbs that protect and knows where to look for the roots which bring down fever. He lives in a giant nest in a tree to the south of the village.
† **Shaman Bear** is responsible for the peace with the Ice. He makes sure frost doesn't destroy houses and harvests, and that villagers don't get lost in the cold. He talks to polar bears and walks through the silent lands. He keeps the village's secrets. When you feel the weigh of a fault, you confess to Shaman Bear. He lives in a cave to the north of the village.

The village is organized around a council and takes decisions collectively. The villagers gather and agree unanimously. Sometimes, some strong-headed people refuse to follow the group. Shaman Wolf makes sure they end up agreeing... or never be a problem again. Those who disappear this way are not mentioned.

Loneliness weighs a lot under the stars, and life is monotonous. In an effort to protect themselves, people have each taken a particular compulsion, a slightly strange preoccupation to keep them from complete loneliness, from the call of the void. But sometimes, it's not enough.

1 Obsessions:
Obsessive flight, devouring hobby, fear of day, fear of snow, fascination for legends, animal mimicry, extreme routine, counting stars, peeling bark from birches, eating snow, keeping still as much as possible, living with eyes closed, alcoholism, extreme repulsion or attraction, protection of daily life.

2 Shadows:
Fear of darkness, fear of day, oblivion, blindness, rest, depression, claustration, child terror, fear of the sun, abandonment of gods, distortion of perceptions, worrying noises, fear of annihilation.

3 Ice:
Adversary of the forest, cold, snow, frozen earth, corpses of reckless travelers, end of trees, ice floe, white bears, shimmering under the moon, lethal cold, crystal forest, brittle branches, pallor, the North is its kingdom, violent winds, frost storms, hail, icy rains, voice in the wind.

4 Incarnate legends:
Imps, ogres, things even more ancient, night spirits, the man in red, the lonely lumberjack, speaking wolves, witches, shacks in trees, white ladies, frost spirits, night dances under the falling snow, fascinating hermits, children-eating beasts, people of the forest in remote clearings.

5 Animism:
Animal mimicry, spirit veneration, giving up old beliefs, secret rituals, masks, fumigations, hay and branch fetishes, dream catchers and forest installations, blood cult, reading runes, great ritual ceremonies, protection, Shaman Reindeer, Shaman Wolf, Shaman Bear, Shaman Owl.

6 Nature:
Wild animals, predators of the woods and distant ice floes, white bears, giant wolves, clawed branches, birches, snowy branches, pine trees, permafrost, lichen, rare grass under a layer of snow, dark and packed conifers, foxes, luminescent mushrooms, dead wood, persisting essences, meager harvest.

7 Constellations:
Sources of light, astrology, beliefs, divinities, the moon, the Chariot, the North star (the most brilliant), the oak, the crow, the two bears, the wheel, the hunter, the snake biting its own tail, falling stars, comforting aurora borealis, prayers to the stars, silent and solitary vows.

8 Society:
The village, center of the world, last town before the North desert, protecting community, not many visits, tight familial structures, big parties, the reindeer celebration, large fires, democratic structure, promiscuity, wakes, tales, human warmth, demanding but efficient structure, not much room for intimacy.

9 Herds:
Farming of reindeers, small farms, large wandering herds, shepherds on sleds, watchdogs, sled dogs, main activity of the community, beast smells, slaughter, survival, animal softness, warmth of a muzzle, reassuring proximity.

10 Loneliness:
Large solitary spaces, closing down on oneself, proximity of the desert, winds muffling noises, isolation, dread of large spaces, fear of crowds, fleeing life in the village, solitary refuges in the woods, hunter sheds, long walks in the snow, ignorance, stupidity.

11 Drives:
Pride, greed, lust, envy, sloth, gluttony, anger, prudence, temperance, justice, courage, unconsciousness.

12 Flesh:
Fights, sex, beauty, promiscuity, skin diseases, putrefaction, death, bestiality, athleticism, hunger, pain, mutilation, consanguinity.

THE GRECO-PERSIAN WARS

A theater by Julien Delorme
(text in public domain)

Though but a small band against a numerous host, they engaged in battle, and performed many glorious exploits. Overpowered at last, and forced within their walls, they collected into the citadel their wives and children, all their treasures, and their slaves; and having so done, fired the building, and burnt it to the ground. After this, they bound themselves together by dreadful oaths, and sallying forth against the enemy, died sword in hand, not one escaping.

Questions

What has brought the Persians here?
Is war unavoidable?
Will the Greeks set aside their disagreements?
Isn't the invasion divine punishment?
What have the oracles said about it?
Are the Persians really here? Who saw them? Who spoke to them?
How can one fight against countless enemies?
What horrible rites are the Persians practicing? Are they the only ones to do so?
What are the pacts binding the Greeks together?
Are there cities who would be well advised to ally themselves with the invader?
Do some characters have links with some Persians?
Is the unity of the Persians real or only a facade?

† **Lycurgue the legislator**, master of Sparta: As powerful and unbending as his book of laws, he leads the might Lacedaemonian phalanxes.
† **Pericles the strategist**, guide of Athens: He has the cunning of Ulysses, is ingenious, wily, many don't trust him.
† **Hypatia the mathematician oracle**: Pythagoras's daughter leads Ephesus. She uses science and the sun to make oracles, but the gods don't like people encroaching upon their domain.
† **Epaminondas the victorious**: Thebes' guardian. An astute but audacious general who would sacrifice everyone to satisfy his vengeance towards the Persians.
† **Darius the conqueror**: Emperor of the Persians and all the outside territories. Some say he's wise, others think he's a remorseless tyrant, or that he is under his counsellors' thumbs, who dictate every single action of his.
† **Katayou the incandescent**: Ishtar's incarnation on earth, she leads the immortal troops, Darius's elite guard, in combat. Some say she shares the emperor's bed, others that she hates him, others that he controls her through dark arts.
† **Orod the emasculator**: The priest of Ahriman, the god whose gold grows pale, is also the empire's mightiest sorcerer. His tent smells of fresh blood and in his braziers burn the private parts of the proudest warriors captured by the empire.
† **Croesus the traitor**: Sardis's ruler has opened the doors of his city and sacrificed his people to Darius, allowing the latter to access the coast. The richest man in the world has saved many treasures from ancient times. Who knows what relics he has given the emperor? No one understands what he did; maybe he has a hidden purpose?
† **Xerxes,the heir**: the God prince is still young, but his ambition is already immoderate. Raised by sorcerers, it's said he fight for unearthly purposes, he is the gods' puppet... or even that he is one.

1 Hubris:
megalomania, outrageousness, superhuman heroic acts, drugs, putting the group at risk, berserk, heroic suicide, challenge, feat, reincarnated ancient heroes.

2 Memory:
divination, oblivion, memories, tragic past, goal, secret bonds resurfacing, resurgence of a memory (real or invented), genealogy, vengeance, testimony, belief, lie, past insults, tradition.

3 The Forest:
trees, animals, plants, mushrooms, parasites, infections, survival, journey, hostile territories, thick thickets, hidden village in the trees, entrenchment, ambush, food.

4 Hold:
degenerescence, mutation, animalism, orgy, stain, monstrosity, fertility, perversion, vermin, epidemic, social corruption, changing vegetation, deformed humankind.

5 Horlas:
legends, rumors, whispers in the wood, mythological creatures, Lernaean Hydra, cyclops, Cynocephales, offspring of ancient gods, hellish mounts of the Persians.

6 The Greeks:
city, state, morality, federation, laws, war, commerce, philosophy, people, Sparta the powerful, Ephesus the wise, Athens the distant, organization, phalanxes, oaths of fidelity, obligations, piety, Senate, obedience, rigor, Lycurgue the legislator, Pericles the strategist, Hypathia the mathematician oracle, Epaminondas the victorious.

7 The Persians:
decadent, immortal, unspeakable sorcerers, giant empire, countless warriors, assorted legions, cruel, subtle, infinite wealth, seducers, exotic people, Darius the conqueror, Katayoun the incandescent, Orod the emasculator, Cresus the traitor, Xerxes the Heir.

8 Religion:
Zeus king of capricious and libidinous gods, Athena wise and protecting, Poseidon the choleric, Hades the underground, oracles, divination, divine possessions, curses, the dark and decadent Persian gods, Baal the devourer, Ishtar the destructor, Ahriman the source of power, sacrifices, libations.

9 The Sea:
briny waters, sea forest, countless seaweed, sargasso, giant jellyfish, sirens, means of escape, triremes, means of asserting one's superiority, float of war, supplies, desolated isles.

10 Love:
passion, hate, desire, fascination, pact, betrayal, sacrifice, respect, filiation, fidelity, lie, trust.

11 Drives:
pride, greed, lust, envy, sloth, gluttony, anger, prudence, temperance, justice, courage, unconscious.

12 Flesh:
fight, sex, beauty, promiscuity, disease, putrefaction, death, bestiality, athleticism, hunger, pain, mutilation, orgies, devious practices, tattoos and scarifications.



CANCER ZONE

Reroute the travelers of Santiago

A theater by Eugénie

The path is covered with asphalt, pierced everywhere by roots, dead trees overlook acid puddles, ivy grows before your very eyes on huge wrecked buildings. A place where mad scientists and mossy shamans fight, where the old world persists and the new hasn't overcome yet. Here, princes ride bikes, bumpkins go on foot. The former have carved themselves a kingdom on the top of buildings with maybe one or two elevators still working. The latter pedal in big wheels to power diabolical machines. And pilgrims look in vain for the scallops that will guide them.

Madness: Senses are saturated (smells of burnt plastic, palpitations of motor machines, electric buzzing, phosphorescence of acid puddles), weak minds confuse one sense for another or hallucinate. Mastering machines, weapons and vehicles causes fantasies of omnipotence, superiority or an insatiable curiosity.

Memory: In the ruins of the old world, one can hear echoes from another time, impenetrable but tenacious recollections. Were we gods? Do we really want to take up with the past again?

Nature: The forest attacks and defends itself. Plants grow and sometimes move before your very eyes, dry out and die just as fast by touching poisoned water or a barrel of radioactive waste ripped open. Animals have mutated (super-evolved?) to survive. Moss and mushrooms proliferate and weaken entire structures.

Horlas: Moss giants, flaming birds, magnetic vibrations, lightning arcs, will the anguish and hauntings of men serve the forest or the machine? Are automatons new golems?

Religion: False prophets base their miracles on electricity, others on the hallucinations you get when eating radioactive mushrooms. In the forest, druidic/shamanic/animist cults multiply; in the “city”, ungodly cults venerate Science, the Machine, the Supreme Mechanist. From time to time, the Inquisition starts a crusade to purify the zone.

Society: Survival of the fittest is the only principle followed by all, and the road belongs to who can control it. In the midst of micro-wars for territories and trade, wandering executioners and judges for sale function as peace keepers.

Clan: Freedom or safety has a price. To devote oneself to a clan, a chief, a family against its protection means adopting its allies and enemies. To become an outlaw means to make your own codes, even with blood or unforgivable acts.

Pilgrims: The zone is a good place to disappear: healers are looking for workforce to scrounge through mountains of waste, princes need slaves to make their wheels turn, scientists want tests subjects.
Travelers are coveted goods.

Technology from another time: Electricity has given life back to strange artifacts, sometimes harmless, sometimes lethal. Scholars are obsessed by all sorts of experiences (making metal men, looking for new fuel, blood-, breath- or flesh-based).

Pollution: The zone is poison. Water is contaminated, fruits are weird, animals are misshapen. Their bellies are saturated with plastic. Fog and steam burn lungs. When touched by acid rain, skin dries and falls, as if molting. To drink, feed, shelter or move requires undivided and careful attention.

Drives: A sudden longing for leaving the road and push into the forest, an irrepressible desire to put one's arm in a cogwheel...

Flesh: There are no healthy bodies in the zone. Or not for long. Each organism finds solutions to survive. Some mutilate themselves to then carry metal, iron or plastic prostheses, with improbable shapes.

1 Madness:
nightmares, hallucinations, saturated senses, synesthesia, hauntings, fascination, megalomania, pyromania, insatiable curiosity, excess of lucidity, drugs.

2 Memory:
memories of another time, pre-apocalypse, oblivion, shared memories, sensation of déjà-vu, old bonds, links, genealogy, complete amnesia, vengeance, testimony, false hopes, lie.

3 Nature:
forest, dead trees, grass covered with soot, mutant birds, moss and mushrooms, parasites, rodents, roots piercing through asphalt, invading ivy and mistletoe, survival, journey, natural fountains of pure water.

4 Horlas:
metamorphosis, moss creatures, fire creatures, inhabitants of silent lakes, mutant people, living machines, suppurations, superstitions, possessions, mental tortures, unspeakable pacts.

5 Religion:
ecstasy, resurrection, faith moving mountains, false miracles, animism, shamanism, druidism, metal idols, cabalistic signs, opposing sects, forest cults, cult of the Mechanic, purifying crusade.

6 Society:
city, morality, feudality, laws, anarchy, outside, authority, philosophy, people, princes, territory wars, corrupted justice.

7 Clan:
princes on bikes, healers, diesel thieves, forest people, conmen, traffickers, insane preachers, maroon slaves, honor code, clan law, freedom, vendetta.

8 Pilgrims:
astray travelers, brotherhoods of pilgrims, losing faith, breaking a vow, act of faith, preys, kidnappings, disappearances, false pilgrims, armed escorts.

9 Technology from another time:
post-apocalypse, electricity, unlikely fuels, firearms, petrol vehicles, automatons, recycled waste, motors, palpitations at the heart of the few buildings still standing, alchemy and chemistry, mechanics, scientist.

10 Pollution:
rust, poisoned water, acid rain and puddles, radioactive mist, toxic fogs, infections, mutation, corruption, open-air garbage dumps, vehicle or building frames, barbwire bushes.

11 Drives:
pride, greed, lust, envy, sloth, gluttony, anger, prudence, temperance, justice, courage, unconscious, curiosity, love, passion, hate, desire, betrayal, sacrifice.

12 Flesh:
fights, sex, beauty, skin diseases, putrefaction, death, bestiality, hunger, pain, mutations, withered bodies, self-mutilation, prosthesis, healing.

NITTY

A city on the way to Santiago

A theater by Eugénie
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The forest has lost its hold around the city. Mobility belongs to the clans of the road, but Science and Power are in the hands of the city princes. Scientists put their experiments at the service of powerful people against relative protection. Here, slavery is contractual, human guinea pigs are seldom willing.

Madness: Senses are saturated (smells of burnt plastic, palpitations of motor machines, electric buzzing, phosphorescence of the acid puddles), weak minds confuse one sense for another or hallucinate. Mastering machines, weapons and vehicles causes fantasies of omnipotence, superiority or an insatiable curiosity.

Memory: In the ruins of the old world, one can hear echoes from another time, impenetrable but tenacious recollections. Were we gods? Do we really want to take up with the past again?

Nature: Moss and mushrooms proliferate and weaken entire structures. The zone is poison. Fog and steam burn lungs. When touched by acid rain, skin dries and falls, as if molting. Crows, pigeons and sparrows have become carnivores and a rat can be bigger than a man.

Egregore: While the forest is kept at bay, egregore soaks the city. People's anguish and torments come alive.

Religion: False prophets base their miracles on electricity, others on the hallucinations you get when eating radioactive mushrooms. Ungodly cults venerate Science, the Machine, the Supreme Mechanist.
From time to time, the Inquisition starts a crusade to purify the zone.

Politics: Divide and conquer, play people's hate against each other, maintain the clans of the road in their permanent wars outside to avoid them coveting the city. Inside, play with the castes and allegiances to maintain one's hold.

Bandits: Outside, the clans of the road and the forest are a threat; inside, revolts of slaves or subversions weaken the current balance. Sincere revolutionaries and real bandits who want to plunder the city work hand in hand.

Castes: The Mechanics devote themselves to elevators and their machines, and act as guardians of the city. The Nobles live on top of buildings in tent palaces, served by Militias who tattoo their employer's symbol on their forehead, and Scientists for whom they act as patrons. The Gardeners grow enough on the side of buildings to feed the city, paying their tithe to the Nobles. Meanwhile, the Muddies rot on the foot of buildings and live off the waste they're thrown. An important counter-power, the Demolishers have invested the underground (subway, sewers, parkings), openly fight against the Princes, and dream of collapse.

Science: Electricity has given life back to strange artifacts, sometimes harmless, sometimes lethal. Scholars are obsessed by all sorts of experiences (making metal men, looking for new fuel, blood-, breath- or flesh-based).

Urbanism: The ruins of a city from the past, with half-collapsed buildings and fragile foundations. The city lives vertically, from the underground to the top of the buildings still standing. Stairs and elevators are the means to move inside them.

Relations: Living with others. Crushing them, using them or loving them.

Flesh: There are no healthy bodies in the zone. Or not for long. Each organism finds solutions to survive. Some mutilate themselves to then carry metal, iron or plastic prostheses, with improbable shapes.

1 Madness:
nightmares, hallucinations, saturated senses, synesthesia, hauntings, fascination, megalomania, pyromania, insatiable curiosity, excess of lucidity, drugs.

2 Memory:
memories of another time, pre-apocalypse, oblivion, shared memories, sensation of déjà-vu, old bonds, links, genealogy, complete amnesia, vengeance, testimony, false hopes, lie.

3 Nature:
mutated birds, rodents, moss, lichen and mushrooms, parasites, roots piercing through asphalt, invading ivy, rust, acid rains, radioactivity, toxic fog, infections, mutation, pollution.

4 Egregore:
metamorphosis, fire creatures, mutant people, living machines, suppurations, superstitions, possessions, mental tortures, unspeakable pacts, contamination of man by machine, corruption.

5 Religion:
pilgrims, monks and nuns, losing faith, cult of the Machine God, purifying crusades, perverted cults, opposing sects, act of faith, mystical ecstasy.

6 Politics:
city, morality, feudality, laws, justice, outside, authority, philosophy, caste, control of masses, diplomacy, power, influence, conspiracy, maintaining order.

7 Bandits:
clans of the road, diesel thieves, forest people, conmen, traffickers, insane preachers, maroon slaves, political agitators.

8 Castes:
Mechanics, Nobles, Militias, Scientists, Gardeners, Demolishers, Muddies, slaves, human guinea pigs, frontal tattoos.

9 Science:
post-apocalypse, electricity, unlikely fuels, firearm, automaton, recycled waste, motor, alchemy and chemistry, mechanics, mad scientist, experiment, artifact, masterwork.

10 Urbanism:
elevators, stairs, walkways, gardens on the side of buildings, destroyed housing towers, buried parkings, subway corridors, sewers, corrugated iron houses, former mall, refitted cranes, neons, palpitations at the heart of buildings, tent palaces.

11 Relations:
pride, jealousy, anger, temperance, curiosity, love, hate, desire, betrayal, sacrifice, allegiance, protection, contract, patronage, marriage, blood bonds, vengeance.

12 Flesh:
fights, sex, beauty, skin diseases, putrefaction, death, bestiality, hunger, pain, mutations, withered bodies, self-mutilation, prosthesis, healing.



LONDON GIRLS

Contemporary London, in a world where the premises of Milesvale appear, for a British romcom in the likes of *Bridget Jones*

A theater by Eugénie

1 Self-improvement: coaching, yoggi tea, “be who you want to be”, “live your dreams”, self-pressure, cult of the body, compulsions, illusions, self-depreciation, megalomania, obsessions.

2 Memory: promise, resentment, family bonds, private diary, reminder, note-for-later, memory lapse, absent-mindedness, reminiscence.

3 Nature: ficus growing quickly, mold in the fridge, roots in the pipes, branches through open space offices, centipedes, insects, squirrels, pigeons, pollens with odd effects, geranium invasion.

4 Misfortune: misunderstanding, coincidence, lose, mistake, inappropriate outfit, blunder, awkwardness, unease, shameful moment, talking without thinking.

5 Egregore: unconscious wish, wish with two sides, revealed secret, pact, intrusive feeling, contamination of reality by feelings.

6 Job: work life, open space office, colleagues (sympathetic, flirty, weird), service, meeting, boss, seminar, big client, office party, humiliation, promotion, success.

7 Daily life: dishes stacked in the sink, dirty laundry everywhere, cat sitting, Mickey pajamas, shapewear body, having drinks, unflagging buddies (ugly friend, weird roommate, star past their prime), peeping neighbor.

8 Social pressure: wedding, being single, divorce, saving face, intrusive parents, rivalry, reputation, gossips, Valentine's Day, Christmas dinner, aunt Rosamund's annual garden party, success, expectations.

9 Comedy: drama queen, heartbreaker, false secret, treachery, lie, dissimulation, fidelity, trust, sincerity.

10 Love: unreachable love interest, perfect romantic love, one-way passion, tenderness, unconfessed turmoil, self-esteem, desire, love triangle, seduction, making up.

11 Drive: pride, greed, lust, envy, sloth, gluttony, anger, prudence, temperance, courage, unconscious, unhappiness.

12 Body: sex, pleasure, desire, promiscuity, beauty, perfect shape, extra weight, shadows under your eyes, waxing, sickness, addiction, alcohol, cigarettes, health, getting pregnant.

The forest

Gardens have turned into forests and overstep their perimeter. Some trees in the city have grown into extraordinary breadth and pierced buildings through and through. Streets are sometimes littered with roots and rapid growth plants escape from municipal flowerbeds. Unflappable, Londoners still go about their business and try to ignore the forest's intrusion into their daily life.

Oblivion

People are starting to feel its effects: headaches, chronic memory lapse, incapability to recognize a face or a familiar place, generalized forgetfulness have become common pains of which pretty much everyone complains. To fight against this, Londoners resort to reminders, complex charts, notes-for-later, private diaries, lists...

Egregore

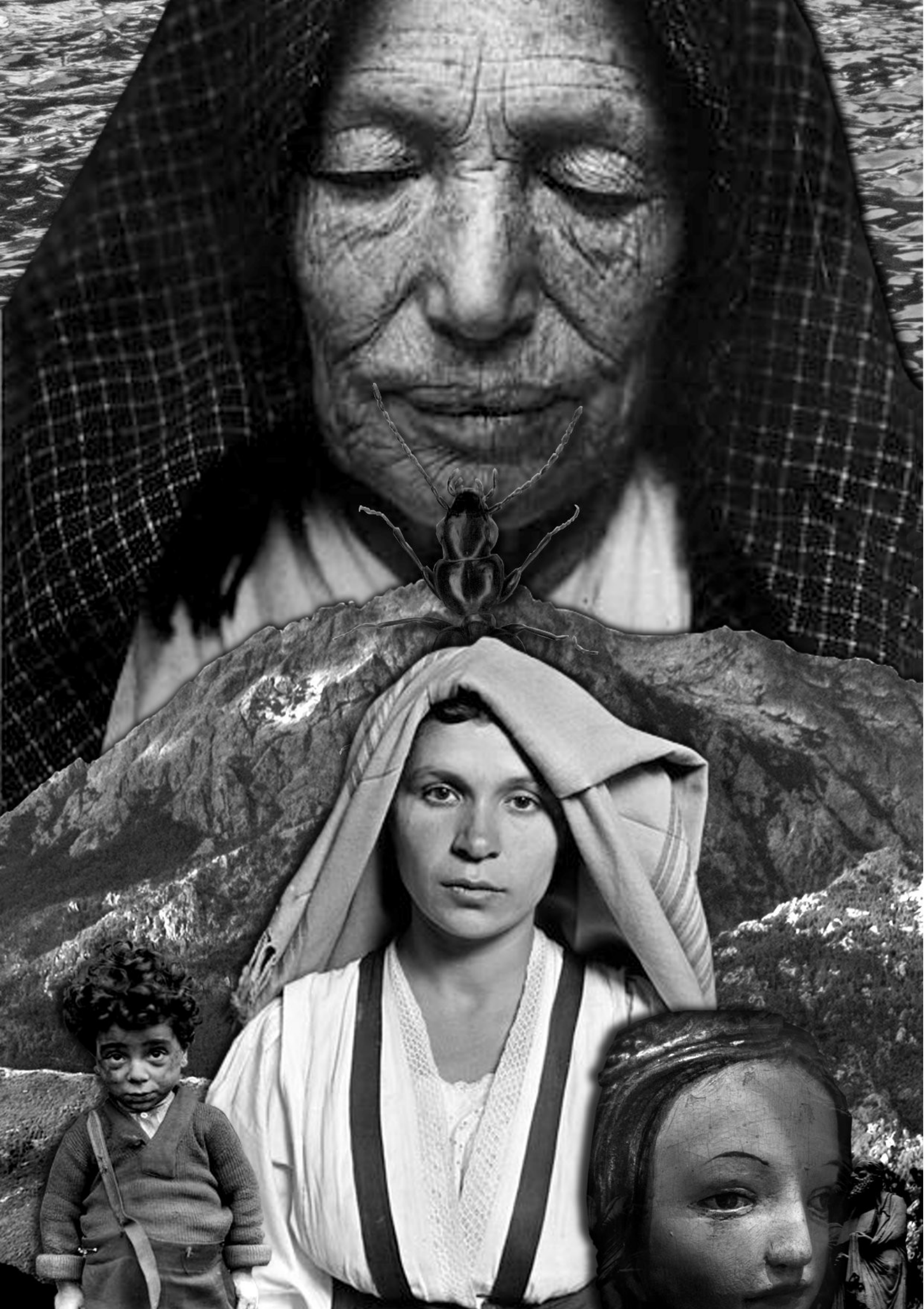
The psychic weave, sum of all human passions... An intense emotion can materialize or be passed on: sorrow can make a sink overflow, an important anger burn clothes, an oath embed into someone's skin. If a secret wants to come out, shutting up won't always stop it. Londoners' intuition has curiously increased tenfold.

The characters

A group of thirty-something loser girl friends. They have unreachable ambitions, or wishes that don't fit them: getting a promotion or their dream job, finding Prince Charming and check the “wedding-house-kids” box, or, at the contrary, adding prestige flings to their list and pretending they're sex queens... But misfortune shadows them everywhere they go: coincidences, misunderstandings, embarrassing moments, relatives intruding in intimacy moments, etc.

Additional rules

† A first turn, without playing, during which each player creates an extra and/or a place (favorite pub, shared flat, intrusive landlady, Nemesis at the office);
† Each turn begins by the player saying “Dear diary”;
† If a character has all her sentences struck out, she becomes unplayable and goes back to live at her parents'.



ISULA DI SUSPIRIU

The island of sighs

A theater by Orlov
(texte in public domain)

1 A folia

Madness, leaves, the wind, what floats, what glides, what flies. The sea breeze brings back the coastline's pestilence. The wind drives you mad, because it buzzes in your ears in the mountains. It carries the voices and songs of the dead. The air is sick in coastal swamps. The breath of air of the valleys where men and beasts sigh. Rain hitting on the shutters. On the last chestnut tree, called Mal Cunciliu, death notices grow, those the wind pushes up to the villages. Woe betide who reads them, because they must kill the one whose name is written or die themselves. Death notices fly: your name is on them.

The old lady told me. “There was a man, a famous hunter from Aulène. Once, he received *a folia di Mauru*, a Mauru leave. It told him he was going to die. So rather than accepting, he killed all his relatives and the people from neighboring villages with his rifle. When he was finished, he went on a hunt and killed a boar. But the one Mauru notified, this one must die. So the hunter from Aulène hurt his foot on the boar's tusks. He couldn't get any help because they were all dead. So he died of rot. In his turn. The one Mauru notifies, this one dies.”

2 Vendetta

Vengeance, memory, oblivion. You avenge yourself, you're mad at others, you kill others, everyone has forgotten why. Bodies bleed when the murderer shows up at the funeral. In the scrublands, they hide and wait for the one from whom they want revenge. The one who insults attracts vengeance, the one who tolerates the insult attracts scorn. You get killed during hunts, during weddings, you get killed without knowing why. Everyone is an avenger or a victim.

They told me once. “One night, I woke up and my wife was dead. She had been stabbed. I had the knife in my hand. Blood. I immediately knew it was me. I don't know why, I loved her. But the blade, it knows. Men forget, but iron has a long memory. I buried her like it is done, and now I went up to the monastery to pray for her.”

3 Macchia

Mare. The oriental coastline, carved by the sea's withdrawal, has become again what it was in the Middle Ages. A large foul and swampy cesspit, a nest for malaria. The wind of the past carries over to the inland a poisoned air, charged with the pollution accumulated at the bottom of the Tyrants Sea.

Rocca. Farmhouses on top of ridges overlook marines where people only go in the winter. They avoid the putrid heat of summer and walk up through the scrublands in the Alta Rocca.

Macchia. The scrublands are everywhere, they cover the whole island, up to the mountain levels. As far as the eye can see, mutated shrubs, arbutus, thistles and brambles. Narrow and curved pathways, devouring anyone who uses them, or carrying them to wonderful places. Votive rocks have a human shape. Tombs, inscriptions IFF, FLNC, PPE which are attributed magical powers. It's the land of shepherds, these psychopomps living near beasts and the dead. The trees, cork oaks, chestnut and pine trees are the lords of the scrublands. On their trunks, sometimes, a grimacing face. Drought. Everything is yellowed, stunted. Floor covered with a rug of dry leaves; underneath, poisonous and mutant insects are swarming. Fires, sometimes, swidden, mad blazes.

One evening, during the vigil. “Before, we burned the scrublands to get pigs there. But the scrublands always came back. And what they take, they never give back. With the pigs, they made boars, goats, black mouflon, and with Christ they made *U Mauru*.”

4 Mal' cunciliu

Hold. Bleeding stones. They take the shape of men carrying blades to kill in the back those not turning to the right direction. The people of Malefazio mate with fishes in their cursed city. The Gio of Fortiveghju only marry each other to avoid catching malaria. The fig tree is a vampire tree. With its balls-shaped fruits, it steals the semen of the one who falls asleep under its shadow. The chestnut tree wears a face distorted by pain. *Mazzeri* gorged with egregore stroll the scrublands under the shape of animals to get to the sabbath and cast the evil eye to those tracking them. Black widows, the *stragga*, are Mauru's contract killers and steal the souls of the living. The dead, spirits, shadows haunt the scrublands and wander near villages. They wait for the living and take them. People protect themselves with magic words only transmitted on the evening of August 15, the night of the stars, celebrated throughout all of Corsica.

A lot of people tell the story of Ghjuvani Paulu of Lumeto, the mule-driver. They all say "So the mule-driver, he was coming down from Lumeto after spending five summer months working with the herds. In his bag, he had a lot of white besons. So he meets an old lady begging and who says to him 'Oh Ghjuvani Paulu of Lumeto, you have a lot of goods, give me some'. But the mule-driver is greedy. He refuses and says to her 'Oh the old one, if I give you some, it will be a little, it won't help you, so I won't give you'. But the old lady she's a *stragga*, she's only got one eye, she gives him her eye which follows him everywhere. Ghjuvani, everywhere he goes, the eye follows. And so the whole world becomes bitter. Mules don't want him anymore. They get away, they kick. No one hires him. Ghjuvani becomes a hatter but people are born without heads. He wants to work in a field, but nothing grows, because the one who is cursed, no man, no beast, no plant wants to help him. So he becomes a salt-picker, but the marsh drowns him, kills him. And so, since then, he's dead."

5 Mauru

The Moor is death. Who He is, nobody Knows. He's the Stranger. Christ. The pirate from the East. The-One-Who-Whispers-in-the-Scrublands. *Frequenza Maura*, his voice, makes itself heard, it calls those who are going to die. Mauru haunts the scrublands and the mountains. He roams by the villages. He's thirsty for blood and woe betide the one who doesn't let him drink. He's *imbuscadu*, ambushed. Fear of Mauru has been anchored in men for a long time. The whole universe fears Mauru. He's represented as a black man, blind, with a blindfold over his eyes, because his eyes are black holes. His face or his signs are carried around the neck to be protected from him, but nothing shields from Him. Crucified in chapels where candles burn, you kneel and pray him. But no word, no request, even the most beautiful, touches him.

When I lost my wife, the elders told me: "Don't cry for her. Go to her tomb and tell her *a oghje a te, a dumanu a me*: today it's you, tomorrow it's me. Otherwise she'll be jealous because those who Mauru takes, he doesn't explain them anything. So the dead don't know anything. They wander in the scrublands, but one day, they come back. Leave water in a glass and olive bread in a plate because the one you lost doesn't know she's dead and she'll come back. So if she doesn't find something to feed herself, it's your soul she will eat."

6 U Populu

The People. The feudality of large domains in the plains. The land of lords, of villages, of houses scattered around the burg. The land of towns and chestnut trees. Those in towns keep their secrets, in fear of Mauru and the forces of the scrublands. Fortified cities, lofty on their spurs. Men of the cities don't work, for reasons of honor, and raid the slaves of the hinterland. Those in hamlets and sheepfolds eat olive flour and a black cheese where worms swarm. Cities, towns, hamlets, all wall up because all are enemies. These people are fierce and forgetful of the world, they don't trust strangers, neighbors, those not from the Clan. Hamlets scattered in the scrublands where those who flee end up. People of arms, people of war, people of sack, people of string.

Shepherds, sorcerers, mule-drivers. Bandits of honor, rebels. Widows in black, old bearded men. Monks, land of the dead and the living. Transhumance: entire cities go up to summer pastures with beasts. Salt-pickers wearing hazmat suits in putrid salt marshes. The haughty Gio living in their farmhouses in town, surrounded by men in arms from their clans. Blacksmiths, artisans, a rustic world hiding away in *caseddu* without windows.

A man told me: “There was this Gio. He ruled over the whole South. He was a cruel man. He was called *Orsu*, the Bear. He coveted the women of village men and slept with them on the nights they got married. So, they trapped him. They gave him a horse with such a bad temper but such a good look that the Gio couldn't stop himself from trying it. And so he tries the horse like he tries a woman. You see? He goes up on the horse, slashes its flanks with his spurs. The horse goes mad, it kicks, goes forward and since the other one is caught in the reins, the horse drags him over the whole plain. So the Gio, he dies but no one knows where. But me, I saw him. His skull. A fly came out of it. It's a fly, but actually it's the Gio's soul, putrid, cruel. It's the fly who carried the disease to us.”

7 U Ceppu

The origin. The Clan. Family, cousins, brothers, sisters, blood. You don't mix because everything is honor. You'll avenge your brother, otherwise he will take revenge on you. You're nothing without your clan, everything is subjected to it. To each home its bearded, thoughtful and silent master. To each clan its patriarch in his farmhouse. You gather around the hearth when the Wind of Spirits blows from the North. You beat the grain all together on the shared area. You move with your friends to cross the Scrublands. You take arms with them to have your revenge. You're suspicious of carnies, of strangers. Who says they're not bandits, or worse, *mazzeri* who have taken human form? Who can know what misfortune the stranger brings, or the one who steps out of the clan's tradition? In cities, you take an oath to the *fratelli* of the neighborhood who know which stars you should honor, and how time passes. Woe betide the one who betrays their secrets.

There was this woman who one day told me: “I am a Lorenzi but when the Martinelli brothers kidnapped me and brought me to their *caseddu* above the Fountain, I became one of them. Now I'm like them. I shoot lead and smoke the pipe and the mother calls me *the daughter*. So, when Gui Lorenzi came with his people to besiege us and take me back, I took my weapon and shot the enemies. I killed one and after the battle they gave him for me to eat. It was my brother, but I ate his liver. It's like that, I belong to my clan.”

8 Fa

Faith, religion. In the cities, there are those who pray to the stars. In Jaccio, they light up large fires. In Bastille, they burn the effigy of the Old King of France. But in villages and burgs, they keep on praying only Mauru. They make the sign of the cross, spray water on children and keep His head or His cross around their necks. They etch on stones the sacred words, REP, PPE, PPL, PPNPP which protect against ghosts. There are the bad ones, those who live in the remotest valleys and sculpt strange idols on rocks. They sacrifice animals or men to the Stone Warriors to animate the statues.

I don't really know how, but that's what I've been told. People say that "Those of Carbini, they're really odious. They honor neither God nor their dead. They built their church without putting a bell tower on it and nothing rings in their village. At first, they thought that since there was no tower bell, the bell wouldn't toll for them. So Mauru came and he killed almost everyone. Among those who survived, there was a *mazzera*, but that, people didn't know. She told them she knew the words and on the evening of August 15, she told them the secret. She did it on August 15 because that night, there are too many stars and the night is too bright. So you see those in ambush coming from afar. Since she was sure nobody was listening, she explained to the people of Carbini that they could cheat Mauru by killing someone from another village when the bell tolled. So in the valley, when the bell tolls in Livi—because those of Carbini, they're too lazy and still haven't built a bell tower—everyone knows Mauru will take two souls. The one who died and the one the people of Carbini will come down to kill."

9 Signu

Signs. Everything is a sign, everything is serious, everything is engraved. People look at the way the wisps of straws fall back to know if the wind of Spirits will blow tonight. They read in olive oil mixed with holy water the stains announcing spilled blood. Everything is said by the scrublands which have no mouth but eyes and thousands of tongues: the buffalo spider presents its rear legs when it leaves its hole, beware of your horse. It presents its fangs, beware of the snake. There are signs you carry, talismans, and signs you do. The one of the cross, if it is well made, exorcises and pacifies. But it makes you sick or insane if it's done upside down. There are the signs of *fratelli*, the compass, the three fists, the ring of the King of France. Signs are taught, learned, they're repeated on the evening of August 15 when demons hide in the scrublands because the night is too clear. It's there that the *signatoru*, the one who signs, the who can read the signs and transmits news from valley to valley is initiated. A *signatoru* told me: “So, myself, when I sign, I often feel something. For example, when I sign the evil eye, I have trouble seeing for some time. When it's a *mazzera* which possesses the one I sign, it's me it attacks. But thanks to the formulas I was taught by Zia Batistina, I always win. But sometimes, it's difficult. Once, a Gio called for me. He wanted me to sign a blade. So, myself, I say the words and pour the holy water. And I feel His presence, there, in front of me, I see Him, like I see you. He blows, he's angry, candles are put out because He doesn't want to leave the blade. So He pierces me, on the hand, and ever since then He's been living in my hand. You see this wound? Always it bleeds.”

10 Core

The Heart. It's like the Scrublands, dark, mysterious and unfathomable. It's better for it to look like earth in summer, ungrateful, yellow, rocky and dry. It's more dangerous than the hand that holds the weapon and the heart in love is more dangerous than a viper. When it sees through your eyes, then you don't understand anything anymore and all you do is covet. Loving, desiring, fucking, the heart is in the body like a bird in its jail. When you're sad, it's heavy and big as if you were leaving to sea. The one who controls the heart of men, he controls the world.

I learned this about Jaccio: “There is a man in Jaccio, a Genovese. He's so handsome and men and women like him so much that everyone who look at him feel their heart beat strongly. So the Gio of the city, Don Simeoni, he says to everyone to avoid him and then, because the Gio wants it, no one speaks to him. But him, the handsome man, he couldn't bear all this silence anymore, so he took the habit and left for the monastery. When he joins the *fratelli*, he troubles their pious thoughts because they look at him and don't say mass anymore. Eventually, they gather, without him. After they have spoken, the abbot does the sign on them and they understand what to do. So, at night, they enter his room with long knives. They disfigure him and now, the handsome man doesn't trouble anyone and the monastery is quiet again.”

11 A rabia

Rage, urges, anger, desire when it doesn't wait to be satisfied. Sometimes, the wind of spirits blows at night, the wind of autan. It carries poisoned, toxic air, from the seabeds that are now dry but covered with pesticides. It blows, yells, pierces eardrums and drives men and beasts enraged. The Vertigo given by sin, pride, lust, envy, acedia. The fury seizing warriors and people of arms.

Everyone knows the story of Dumenicu Viaggatore but I'll tell it. “He's a skilled hunter. He goes hunting and follows a big boar for days. So, the wind of autan blows and Dumenicu becomes enraged. So he goes on, his dogs die, his rifle sinks in a torrent but him, he walks through the scrublands, he follows the paths. Like a dog would, he smells the earth, bends down and searches the bushes. He barks to provoke the boar. He grazes his clothes on all that stings, creaks and grates. So, he's covered in blood. And then, finally, he sees the boar. He rushes and kills it with his bare hands. Alas! It was his father who got worried and went out looking for him. So, he becomes a *mazzeru*, a man and a dog. And the one he bites, this one, he becomes an enraged dog.”

12 Lamentu

Lamentation, sorrow, sacrifice. There are those who tear off the skin of their faces at funerals and those who sing the complaints. There are those who have sad, red, bloated eyes. There is mourning. One wears black. One doesn't shave. There is the gloomy complaint of spirits who are resentful towards those who live. The songs of monks and their dark harmonies during masses for the dead. The brothers who whip themselves to appease Mauru or for simple pleasure. There is Mauru who is crucified to teach suffering to the world. The stigmata, hands that bleed, eyes that cry, the sex of women which empties red. The melancholy of the one who lost everything, even his clan.

The old one says: “In Essarti, they do nothing like the rest. When everyone celebrates the stars of August 15 and Dona di Strelli, the *fratelli* of the city, them, they take on a gloomy face, wear red hoods on their heads and walk through the city, whipping themselves with thorns hard as metal, the kind that grows over there. One of them wears a white hood. This one, he climbs everywhere with weights on his feet and carries the Cross to the upmost place of the city. On the way, people beat him, sting him with their points and insult him. So, when he arrives at the top, he's quite happy when they nail him on the cross... It's almost the end of his calvary.”



BELOW FORTY

Men, beasts and Gods in the icy hell of Milesvale's Great North

A campaign in three theaters by Orlov
(text in public domain)

This text was first written for tome 4 of the adventures collection *40 ans de jeu de rôle* (*40 years of roleplaying games*).

Pitch

North: where Milesvale's haunted forest doesn't grow no more. It's where the Ice Nightmare begins, a leveled tundra looking both like a frozen ice field and a foul swamp. This campaign-theater aims at tying together several musical, literary and scientific influences to make up a sort of post-apocalyptic (and, one hopes, poetic) patchwork. The bands Sektor Gaza and Arkona were listened to non-stop during this writing, which was also influenced by the novels of Y. Rytkheou, the stories of F. Ossendowski and the study of Bertrand Hell, the Black Blood, Alexander Rogozhkin's movie *Kukushka* as well as *Corto Maltese in Siberia*. The goal is to play *Inflorenza* in a yet-to-be-explored corner of Milesvale, through some narrative and aesthetic shifts, also homages to this game and his author. I want to thank him for the pleasure I had to go through Milesvale first and *Inflorenza* second, both by reading and playing it; I also want to express my gratitude for the exchanges during the creation of this theater and its southern little brother, *Isula di Suspiriu*.

User's manual and intentions

Since *Inflorenza* is not a game with secrets, players should have access to the whole theater, even if the bipolar encyclopedia is more than enough for the reader in a hurry. In a *Carte Blanche* mode of playing, information on the three places can be reserved for the Confidant only. Finally, extras are offered but they can also be played as characters within an epic campaign.
It's possible to play *Below Forty* as a saga. In this mode, every time all the players have finished their turn, the action moves to another place and another season. Therefore, it's possible to create an epic campaign in which, for instance, the destructive arianism of the Neanderthal Wheelis—symbolized by the Black Sun that shines on his hunts—would be opposed to the Renaissance strength, a highly chaotic horde lead by the Ataman-Lama and his Sibiriaki. A campaign in Murmansk can be founded on the mythical White Whale of the Samih.

Presentation of the theater

In the future, the Tundra. Long after a cataclysm has destroyed civilization. A frozen hell covers the North-West part of Russia and North of Scandinavia. In the South, it spreads to Milesvale's haunted forest and in the West to the Wall of Shame erected by mighty China to protect itself from the abominations generated by Milesvale. Men, beasts and Gods of the Tundra try to survive, fighting against nature and between each other. They quarrel, hunt, eat, love, fuck and terrorize each other. Below, the Hollow Earth, realm of the spirits, the dead, the futures and the pasts. The Tundra is the realm of the Almighty Frost-Father, a divinity associated with Hunting and Frost. But it's also a moving place, an attractive place for its resources and the traces of the past ice has miraculously preserved. Thus, it's a place of death, of survival hanging by a thread, but also a country of hope and absolutism.

A small glacial chronology

1917: Russian revolution. The Samih speak about the "beginning of the Sovok Golden Age".
1917-1921: Civil war between the Bolsheviks and the Whites. In Siberia, baron Urgen Stenberg gives a hard time to the Reds. The Samih call this era the "Great Demon hunt".
1921-1930: The Monastery of the Sokolovki Islands (currently Isle-of-Crows) becomes the first soviet prison-camp.
1929-1953: Stalin in power. The Samih call Stalin "Good Father Sovok".
1945: During the Nuremberg trials, called by the Samih "the Holy Liquidation of Black Criminals of the First Apocalypse", American lieutenant Wheelis, jailer of Goring, a Neanderthal of the Black Lodge like him, trades a cyanide capsule for a map of the Hollow Earth.
1972: Within the framework of Project Mohole, Soviets dig a 12-km hole in Zapolyarny, the current Zapalyarki.
2000: Sinking of the Kursk.
2187: Beginning of panleprosy in Siberia. Formation of the Sibiriaki Horde.
2200: Disaster Day. Samih Romances talk of the "Flight of the Sovoks" or of the "Awakening of Almighty Father-Frost".
2341: The Sibiriaki Horde is defeated before Moscow and moves to the North-West.
2385: Roman-Lama becomes Ataman of the Sibiriaki.
2395: Lieutenant Franck Wheelis finds the map of his ancestor. He buys back a wagon of the Amerika train which belonged to the nazi potentate. He gets himself appointed on the USS Hazelwood.
2396: Resolution of the 120th congress of the Chinese CP: "Long live naturalist Empiricism! Death to cosmopolitan technology!".
2399: Raskolnikov becomes Abbot-Komlag of the Isle-of-Crows Monastery.

Almighty Father-Frost: Master of Hollow Earth Gods. He has no Nilzya! and can devour or mate with anything or anyone. He sometimes looks like an old hunter inviting his victims to eat forbidden, but always savory and nutritive, food. Sometimes, he looks like a White Elk, majestic, with perfectly symmetrical antlers and testicles, leading hunters to their doom. But it's when he looks like a huge and monstrous humanoid creature with cut feet that people fear Him the most.

Antifrost: Magical beverage brought by foreign sailors. The Samih claim Antifrost can make you invisible to Almighty Father-Frost.

Beasts: Like men, they talk, think and love each other. Like men, they can kill or be killed. A beast is what is neither man nor God.

The Bellow: The influence of Almighty Father-Frost is embodied in a matter (Permafrost) and a Call (the Bellow). When the Bellow is heard, men and beasts feel it, particularly if they often eat forbidden meats. Tingling and itching make them irritable and savage. Their blood becomes black, it's not uncommon for wood to grow on their head or for their chest to become covered with a mineral and rough moss. The victims of the Bellow become savage, reject life in collectivity and end up disappearing in the Tundra.

Gods: The people of the Tundra call Horlas Gods or Spirits, as well as as the monsters and demons from the Hollow Earth threatening Humankind with extinction. The mightiest Horlas, like Almighty Father-Frost, embody one or several of the struggle for Survival principles (Hunting or Frost in his case). Shamans say they know the formulas to keep them at bay, appease them or banish them.

The Hollow Earth: Realm of spirits, of Gods, of fantastic hunts. Located under the Tundra.

The Hunt of All by All: In the Fall, a season when survival is crucial, men and beasts take all sorts of risks to gather resources before the Winter. In such a frenzy, the distinction between hunters and preys becomes blurry. All hunt and all are hunted.

Men: Samih, Sibiriaki, Walkers or Strangers; whether born from the Tundra or from elsewhere, men meet, fight and love each other. Like animals, they think, talk, hunt and fuck each other. Like animals, they can kill or be killed. This term refers to everything that is neither a beast nor a God.

Milesvale: Many people from the Tundra think, wrongly, that Milesvale is a land of plenty where all sorts of preys are strolling between gigantic trees. They have trouble understanding the motivations of Walkers.

Nilzya! (We mustn't!): Interdiction, sexual, dietary or cultural taboo, collective or individual. Not respecting a Nilzya! is always a serious offense.

Permafrost: This layer of frost lies under the earth. It holds ferments of decomposition (radioactive particles) and life (carrion, meat) that are freed by the spring. According to the Samih, permafrost is the semen of Almighty Father-Frost.

Romances: Great sagas told to avoid forgetting. Romances include mythical stories, lineages, rules of survival and dietary interdictions specific to some clans. Forgetting one's romance or the romance of one's clan is forgetting how to survive. It's dying.

Seasons: Seasons of the Tundra are unpredictable. Spring can follow Fall, Winter can come before summer. Nothing is fixed, nothing is written, except hunting.

Strangers: Only the Samih come from the Tundra. The Slavic and Scandinavian neighbors, as well as the Americans and Chinese exploring the Tundra or exploiting its resources are called “Strangers”. Walkers and Sibiriaki are not considered Strangers because of their nomadism.

Sovok: A long time ago, blond giants wearing a Red Star on their foreheads roamed through the Tundra. Their arms ended in sickles, hammers, miner picks or rifles. They created everything. They destroyed everything.

Walkers: Isolated individuals or groups from Milesvale defying dangers of the Tundra to skirt around the Wall of Shame and reach the Outside, a mythical country.

The Wall of Shame: A huge and impassable high wall built to isolate Milesvale.

Yaranga: This Sibiriak name is used throughout the Tundra to designate a house. It can be a hut, an igloo, a prefab, a cave or a bear's den.

Substitution themes

1 Winter:

In Winter, the Tundra is a hostile and frozen stretch of land, a trap ready to close on you.

Elements: Raging winds, night black as ink, surreal aurora borealis. Cutting hummocks. Pressure lines forming horrible deformations on ice. Snow alternatively pure and immaculate and black and putrid. Almighty Father-Frost. Horla beasts roaming through the ice field.

2 Permafrost:

The earth is constantly frozen, only the superficial layers defrost.

Elements: Carrions of prehistorical animals uncovered by frost, colored and juicy fruits kept under the ice. A putrid, semi-frozen silt flows from a barrel half-uncovered by frost. Sovok ruins and icons. The other day, we found a body, brought it back to the Yaranga and laid it by the fire, he defrosted and started talking to us, but no one understood him, so he was sad. We found seeds in the ice, planted them and big plants started to grow.

3 Spring:

In Spring, the ice layer melts and the ground partially defrosts, spitting rocks and névé. Rivers overflow.

Elements: Mild spell. Roar of avalanches. Sinister creaking of icebergs rubbing on each other. Rivers overflowing. Enraged beasts out of hibernation. Nomads. Groups of walkers wading through frozen mud. Khlysty with bare cut feet. Sibiriaki roaming around, repairing a busted tractor. Samih leading their Reindeers to pastures which location they forgot. Inmates from the Isle-of-Crows escaped in a canoe, zigzagging between the ice and sea animals.

4 Clan:
In this hostile environment, individual survival is impossible. Family, the clan, the tribe, the horde give you the best chances of survival.
Elements: We have captured Samihs, they'll teach us to raise Reindeers. My dead father stuck his head at the door of the Yaranga, the earth had just defrosted and his corpse slipped from the bank where it laid, he came to greet me. The shaman doesn't remember his Romance, he drank too much; the clan is doomed. Folding hunt: all kill, all will eat since "Who doesn't kill, doesn't eat!". I was born at night in February and I was sung a Romance that wasn't mine: I don't know if I am me.

5 Summer:
During summer, the day lasts a very long time, it's the season of harvesting and hunting.
Elements: Permafrost is unfrosting: foul stench, the earth shits black, steaming meat, oozing through the purple rocks and lilac lichens. I must find certain mushrooms, otherwise I will forget the Romance. Swamp spiked with small pine trees and vampire mosquitos. We have put our canoes at sea to hunt whales.

6 Zapalyarki:
A town where Soviet scientists once dug deeply. It's now base camp for the Sibiriaki.
Elements: The Ataman-Lama had a vision: he saw a white eagle holding a red star in its claws. Leife Antikrist Snorri saved me, as a payment I had to sing him my Romance, my past belongs to him. My son fell in the Asshole of the World! A voice calls me at the last floor of a destroyed building. Mutant dynamo. Sibiriakis joust on their snowmobiles. A Walker loves a Sibiriak woman. The Marechal-Golden Lama Abakoumov covets the yaranga of the Ataman-Lama. When the Ataman calls, up hill and down plain, we rise, us, the dead of previous wars!

7 Hunt:
Hunting and fishing are the only means for the people of the Tundra to get the essential animal protein and necessary fat to get through winter.
Elements: I walked, walked, but found no game, I killed my dogs and ate them. No one aims like me, no one kills like me. I'm not a hunter but a prey, I'm not a bear but a man. Tonight, I heard the Bellow. We had a good hunt: I killed seven Samih and a stranger. I met an Elk but I didn't hunt it. I killed a man and took his intestines to make a drive-belt: I'm the most clever of mechanics. The shaman took his mushrooms and went hunting. I hunt from a blind and share nothing. I kill for pleasure, not to feed myself. Hunters stuff themselves with giblets, they laugh and look at me, they are covered in blood, manly, noxious atmosphere.

8 Murmansk:
The current city of Murmansk was once a war port in the Sovok period. Its fjord is now lashed by the nets of Chinese and American trawlers.
Elements: A Sovok submarine gets back to port four hundred years after having sunk. Lieutenant Wheelis gathers brave people to go hunt in the Hollow Earth. Distribution of Anti-frost by the Strangers, orgies. A radioactive green algae invades abandoned docks. It rains capelins and sprats. They brought me here, on their station and now they are staring at me. The Walrus-God refuses to let whalers and canoes through, he demands to be found a wife, he will give her a golden ring, will love her and take her. The Sarkomant Ze Wang is looking for volunteers: he gives them all the calories they can dream of. The Water of the fjord entered my dream, grey and liquid, it smothers me. Shaman Illya put a spell on an American whaler's crew when she learned they wanted to kill the white whale.

9 Fall:
Summer lasts a little longer, the Tundra is red all over, burnt. Winter always comes too soon.
Elements: Loving each other, mating even if it means losing your last bit of strength, filling up with life. Smoking your pipe in front of your Yaranga while the cold doesn't yet sting. Hunt of All by All. We break camp. Sacrifices for the Winter to come. Draughtproofing boats and canoes before taking them out again.

10 The Isle-of-Crows:

This is how the Samih call the archipelago of the Sokolovki, a place of retreat and exile for orthodox monks, a place of deportation for Soviet authorities.

Elements: Komlag Starost Raskolnikov has declared the year 1666 has begun, the end of the world is close! I'm in love with a white crow I saw flying towards the isles, I will catch him and he will make me a child I will call "Proud Wing". The clan's shaman was kidnapped during a Purge. Severed sexes, kept in formalin. Blood is flowing from an inmate's eyes and hands, everyone thinks he's the Pakhan. Part of the brothers-inmates has broken the rules and decided to collaborate with the brothers-keepers: death to these schismatic bitches! Two Starost inmates are trying to win my favors, blood has been spilled. I wear on my chest the tattoo of my fate: you can see the three bulbs of the Savior-By-Blood Church.

11 Hollow Earth:

Most people in the region believe there is another world under the earth, peopled by wonderful spirits.

Elements: Putrid stench, wisps of smoke, vapor on ice. Electric clouds. Ice covers crystalline palaces. Last night I dreamed I saw my son and daughter, both dead but they were floating, they were happy, I wish I was close to them. Prehistoric game are coming out everywhere, they are furious and hunting after us. I saw the Yaranga where Shaman-Bear lives. Monstrous Horlas, seducers, predators. Almighty Father-Frost.

12 Nilzya! We mustn't!:

Survival is only possible if some rules are followed, some taboos avoided. We have to remember them, however.

Elements: I ate Wolf meat, Nilzya! they met and banished me because the one who eats the Wolf, he becomes the Wolf. I was drunk and mocked my wife's nakedness, Nilzya! she has the right to tie me to her sled. They said the name of my father and he is dead, Nilzya! a great misfortune will strike me down! I hunted by fold and ate giblets, Nilzya! the other hunters think I'm a thief. I sang a Romance in front of Strangers, Nilzya! they can steal the clan's past and stop us from remembering how we survive.


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Zapalyarki

Sovok ruins stand in the middle of the Tundra. Hot steam comes out of a 20 meters wide hole, disappearing into the Hollow Earth. This place is called the asshole of the world. He who breathes the steam can see far into the future and the Past.

Zapalyarki is currently occupied by the Sibiriaki Horde. The Horde is made of Siberian people who have fled Panleprosy. Paleosiberians, Koreans, Mongols, Russians, Ukrainians, Buriats. Geologists, prospectors, camp keepers, criminals, bureaucrats, soldiers of special forces, sailors of the Pacific float, families were gathered under the authority of the mystical Ataman-Lama.

Caravans, reinforced vehicles, snowmobiles, Chukchi or Inuit sleds make up a temporary camp installed around Sovok-era abandoned buildings, decorated with sickles, hammers, sheafs of wheat and glyphs forming indecipherable slogans.

Personalities:

† The Ataman-Lama, leader of the Sibiriaki: This old and blunt man, who wears an admiral uniform and the cape and golden hat of the lamas beyond-the-Wall, claims to be the reincarnation of baron Urgern, an evil entity defeated by the Sovoks. A warrior poet always on the move, he only speaks in perfect rhymes and knows the Romances of everyone under his rule, including “the Mirror of Oblivion”, the great Chukchi saga. His golden words, however, hide a sinister motive, because his goal is to destroy all of Milesvale so the Haunted Forest is replaced by the steppe in which the Great Horde of Dead and Living Sibiriaki will prosper. He is trying to have visions showing him where the weapons ensuring him the fulfillment of his destiny are hidden.

† Liki “Antikrist” Snorri, Scandinavian spy: This Scandinavian man, blond and hairy, has explored the cursed trays of Bergen's discotheque, listened to and transcribed the obscene texts of a Romance called “The Icons of the Deathless Gods”, a saga composed by a pagan bard called Arkona. He has joined the Ataman-Lama whom he is trying to manipulate. Indeed, “Antikrist” Snorri is determined to bring Ragnarök by pushing the destructive and lyrical predilections of the Horde leaders. He has the power of stealing Romances, so long as they're being told to him, depriving a man or a whole clan from their past.

Murmansk

Murmansk's fjord enters far into the frozen lands. An outpost frequented by Samih farmers but also by the Chinese and Americans coming to fish in the region has developed at the bottom of the fjord. The Samih claim the fjord's waters are sacred because there reside the skeletons of the Metal Whales who created the world. They swim there, since the water is surprisingly warm, even when it is frozen on the surface. Overarmed nuclear submarines can still be seen, sometimes half-sunk, still moored to the gray docks covered with sempervirant fluorescent lichen.

Murmansk's Samih population is deeply corrupted by the consumption of Antifrost largely distributed by the Americans and the Chinese to better fool these proud farmers and hunters. In exchange for Antifrost, the Strangers get what they want, whether it's meat or skins, but also young people or children who are used as slaves on their installations. On nights of sabbath, the Strangers generously distribute Antifrost to the credulous Samih and nights end in bloody orgies.

On days of clear weather, you can see the Chinese fishing station, alongside which trawlers exploiting the waters full of fish by the Tundra are drawn.

As for the USS Maine, it's permanently anchored in the Fjord. Specialized in deep-sea fishing, products made by cutting whales and walruses are conditioned on site and carried by plane towards the Mainland, the American continent.

Personalities:

† Shaman Magga: This 40-year-old Samih shaman has self-proclaimed herself guardian of the Sacred Whales she ritually feeds every morning. She knows “Far in the Mist”, the great romance telling the story of the Samih People and their mists, and doesn't see well the Strangers' intrusion in the region. She threatens people with her sacrificial weapon, a metal can opener covered with runes.

† Ze Wang: This zealous civil servant from the Chinese communist party is a doctor linked to “Red Krill” Murmansk station 103. Applying the order “For naturalist empiricism, against cosmopolite technology”, he's devoting himself to sarcomantic works, aimed at emulating what he considers the most evolved life form in an arctic environment, the Walrus. He skins alive Samih bought against Antifrost to graft epidermis and layers of fat on Chinese sailor inmates. The latter walk on docks and in Murmansk's hovels their horribly swollen bodies. Currently, Ze Wang wonders if having tusks couldn't, one way or another, improve the sailors' output.

† Franck Wheelis: This Neanderthal, member of the Black Lodge, leads the USS Hazelwood, a huge aircraft carrier converted into a factory-trawler for fishing. He also calls himself the Great Hunter because he is devoted to organizing hunts aimed at motivating his troops. During these debauched safaris, an helicopter carries into the Tundra his vehicle with caterpillar tracks, a luxurious wagon nicknamed Amerikkka, decorated with a swastika oriented to the right. Roaming the Tundra, Wheelis and his mates get drunk on blood, raw flesh and fat. Humans are sometimes on the menu. But his expeditions aren't limited to these cynegetic excesses, they are also a way for him to locate the entrances to the Hollow Earth which secrets he is trying to uncover.



The Isle-of-Crows monastery

The isle owes its name to the fact that every spring, crows stop there on their way to the North-West. They gather around the Camp-Monastery of Saint-Savior-by-the-Blood, which three golden bulbs evoke past splendors and old times. This construction from before the Sovok era is used as a base by the fanatic sect of the Khlysty. These brothers are both jailers and prisoners, torturers and victims, inflicting and feeling the worst abuse until they are completely dehumanized, a necessary step towards ultimate knowledge of Evil, which is what these lunatics aspire to. They claim one must know the Sovereign Evil before the year 1666 starts, when the world will end and only those who have experienced Evil before making amends will receive Salvation.

In the Spring and in summer, they take their canoes to sea to do "Purges" aimed at finding prisoners and recruiting future brothers in the Tundra. In the winter, they have bloody sacrifices in the name of Almighty Father-Frost and their Pakhan, the Suffering Lord, Prophet and Martyr, Jesus Khlyst. The Isle then rings out with the sound of their dark imprecations, carried out by the deep voices of the monks-guards and the harrowing or bawdy songs of the brothers-inmates.

The Brothers are as obsessed by pain, debauchery and cruelty as by the accumulation of knowledge. Their library is one of the largest in the world. Side to side, you can find propaganda magazines from the Sovok era and old religious books, as well as Russian novels from the XIXth or XXIst century.

Roman Rodionovitch Raskonikov: The Starost Komlag of the Camp-Monastery seems a dull and miserable monk until you look into his obsessed, besieged eyes. He's an inspired being to whom Khlyst is talking. His story is known by all: he killed his old lodger just to discover evil. He then made a pilgrimage to the Camp-Monastery, walking without shoes, cutting his feet on ice for expiation. He arrived without feet, moving on a board with wheels. The other Monks, inmates and guardians, abused him in the worst ways. Raskolnivok enjoyed his suffering, always asking for more, until he was elected Komlag. He is actually a Corax placed by his brothers in this strategic place to fulfill the complex schemes of his real crow brothers.

THE CABIN

A theater by Arjuna Khan
(text in public domain)

Proofreading: Sophie Pérès.
This theater was first published in the magazine *Les Chroniques d'Altaride.*

Estonia. Successive floods have transformed the country into a huge mud pond. Constructions, cities and monuments were swallowed by swamps and peat bogs. A few tenacious people, attached to their land, roam the region on improvised rafts or rebuilt wrecks. The forest has adapted to the new landscape, its roots plunging into unfathomable depths, giving quite a strange look to the shape of the trees. Trunks curl up next to each other, as if they were trying to kiss without completely reaching one another. Knots on wood form faces imbued with a scary softness. The place is silent, and yet one expects to hear furtive noise any minute from now, distant whisperings, shapes that would hide in the meanderings of this vegetal trap... This place of deserted humanity is at the heart of a handful of wanderings souls' thoughts. They stride across the territory once representing Eastern Europe. Survivors, queens, poets, warriors and monsters have all lost something of value and feel deprived of an essential thing. Birthed in dreams, an obsession feeds them and starves them, looking like an old rusted cabin, the remains of a ship that once dived underwater. Night after night, an idea takes shape in them; they are convinced that this feeling of a void, of an absence can be filled beyond their hopes if they find this sunken ship.

Play proposition

After an eternity of exploration, wandering and suffering, your characters finally reach the destination that has inhabited their dreams for so long.
This theater offers you to explore the development and the conclusion of the characters' quest and to try and find a moral or thrilling thoughts out of it.

Character creation

Creating characters, just enough to have fun.
Since the freedom you have when creating characters in *Inflorenza* is one of the game's main interests, I don't want to restrain you during this step. However, to make sure you have fun, and especially if it's the first time you're playing with this theater, I strongly suggest using these few optional rules.
Outside from your first sentence written during creation with the verb *to want*, you'll have to create two other sentences that will introduce strong problematics from the get go.
You'll have to write a second sentence that will determine why your character is in the cabin. Your character will look for something. It can be a particular person, feeling, memory, object, information... Whatever it is, it's something vital for your them.
Then, you'll have a third sentence that will establish a strong emotional bond with another character. You went there together, side by side, and whether it was predictable, absurd or simply surprising, a bond was established. Love, admiration, respect, envy, hate are many possibilities among which you can choose.

Noteworthy places

The following list is not exhaustive; it only offers some places suitable to create fun stuff, especially if you use them with the theme table. This theater aims to make use of a specific location around which the characters will orbit. Remember that the universe of Milesvale allows for the integration of whimsical or even incongruous propositions. And because this theater asks for symbolism and oneirism, don't hesitate to be creative on those aspects and to let yourself be carried by what is happening.

The cabin

It's a metal carcass full of holes and porous reflections, a rust mass bathing in muck. Metallic syphilis, toxic algae, improbable bric-à-brac wrap themselves around the structure to the sound of the swamp's whispers. The inside seems to have been weaved in a network of electric cables and multicolor fibers. The light coming from those cables switches the ship from deepest darkness to a maelstrom of bright colors.

Engine room

Huge metal cubes overlap each other, their shadows looming on the flooded corridors running along them. Large wheels made for evacuating the overflow of water and cooling down the machines are decorating the walls. However, they are useless and the cubes' faces are smooth, with hoops whose purpose is unknown. You can't solve this puzzle with physical force, but in Milesvale, a thought can be mightier than a sword.

Control centers

Despite the appearances, piloting the ship is child's play. You're supposed to put capsules with vague reflections into small holes to choose direction, and a simple handle allows you to move. It's like the ship was waiting to be driven by someone and taken away, like it had nothing left to love or cherish here, to hold it back.
The sonar shows us a purple sample. Larger and more intense when emotion is strong. But what are these black spots that sometimes show? There are flesh-colored suits under the command tables. Wearing them allows one to move under the sludge without risking suffocation. When you see them molding your body's shape so perfectly, you'd almost think they are alive.
Exploring the abyss will reveal its secrets to all those who will accept to discover what was buried. But the souls left to rot in the deeps will not miss such an occasion to go back to the surface.

Sirhates:

Drowned bodies bathed in light, greedy for other people's desires. From their gaping mouths, seemingly torn apart by a tremendous force, women voices echo, screaming their distress. They are corpses animated by anger, egregore sweating through their foreheads, sliding on their bloodied bodies that frozen water struggles to maintain alive.

The egregore palpitating around these bodies manifests almost physically when they get in contact with another human being. Impulsions of suffering, wasted lives, violated intimacy are sometimes so strong that electric arcs spontaneously appear, as if announcing the signs of an environmental change.

They haunt seabeds or emerge from water drops, and are irresistibly attracted by feelings strong enough to echo in them. Carnal passion, transfixed love, latent desire, hidden emotions are delicate pleasures they can't resist.

The desiderares:

Desiderares are a direct, tangible, palpable manifestation of egregore. Examples of the physical form of these creatures include dark and watery shapes deforming reality, mist saturated with memories of someone else, phantasmal apparitions and entities infiltrating dreams.

1 Madness:

Piercing sounds echo in the cabin. Young naked girls linger on the bridge, specters of violence and bruises. Their belching hearts scream their despair of being unable to embrace anything. Bags of black tea rot within the hold, releasing a characteristic smell, inviting the most absurd desires.
Hallucination, fear, phobia, personality disorder, haunting, megalomania, mind parasites, nightmares, speaking in tongues, possession, excess of lucidity, drugs

2 Memory:

An old moribund sailor is recovered from sea; he speaks about a mysterious wreck, crucible for the memories of yesteryears. The pages of the log book are detaching, revealing grieving faces.
The ship's machines are malfunctioning, we're losing control of the ship and sinking deeper and deeper into the swamps. The sunken city of Mälu, in the midst of the ruins, the young enamored boy with slit hands who whispers answers to those who dare come close.
Tarot of the past, divination, oblivion, memories, tragic past, objective, bonds, genealogy, complete amnesia, vengeance, testimony, belief, lie

3 Desiderares :

Thick, rust-colored water infiltrates the wiring and rises slowly. Shapes are forming and irresistibly glide towards the command panel. A little boy with white hair wanders through the corridors, looking for Aure Las, his favorite doll.
Bunks are stained with virginal blood, walls scream their frustration of being unable to shout, the trunks of disappeared occupants let themselves be eaten by time and tear, afraid of being asked what they contain. Vindicative spirits, hate sharpened by expectations and frustration, belief impossible to satisfy, sadness, void, oblivion.
Death blow, conjugal violence, lost paternity, frustration, regret, adultery, strange dreams, perverted idealism, betrayed childhood, buried memory, broken love

4 Hold:

Screens turn on and off without reason, briefly showing scenes of violence on isolated women.
Deep waters are infested by black ink when pressure pushes on the outside walls. Food is disgusting, a taste of sea water and dust, the desire to taste everything that's shameful and dirty. The disease of dead eyes, seeing those who want to talk to you, hearing those who want to see you. The sirhates' water echoes and whines on broken bodies, a rain of ash which revives you and sends you to sleep.
Degenerescence, mutation, animalism, Shub-Niggurath, orgy, stain, monstrosity, fertility, perversion, vermin, epidemic, social corruption

5 Egregore :

Electric arcs are forming in the engine room. The metal cubes finally react, a stroke and they tremble, a kiss and they open. Specters of the abyss are searching for a body to inhabit and love each other again. Memories of lost beings take shape and ask us about their suffering.
Legends, rumors, psychic remanence, specters, mythological entities, sorcery, Horlas, haunting, strong emotions, tale, supernatural, bonds of fate

6 Society:

Banks of moray eels gather around the ship and form disturbing frescos. A war is coming, the ship engines refuse to obey the force driving them. The man with the gleaming vest has precisely what you're looking for under his vest, but you'll have to find something he doesn't have to trade.
City, State, morality, feudality, laws, war, anarchy, Outside, journeys, commerce, philosophy, people

7 Clan:

Horla hunters try to cleanse the ship by fire. Sirhates are fighting each other over the still intact feelings wandering through the place. The ship's last occupants are trying to escape in spite of all the will trying to hide them.
Secret society, tribe, sect, friends, family, faction, alliance, debt, duty, Lodges of the Golden Masks, Corax ways, lineage of brothers

8 Religion:

The cabin is the key to get to the limbo. A feeling has been lost and must be found, fervor is a guide through darkness. Horlas have taken over the slaughterhouses to dress them up as a place of worship.
Faith, miracle, totem, taboo, heresy, piety, divinity, followers, dogma, transgression, curse, unbelief

9 Science:

Scientists eaten by corruption have found the cabin and want to seize its riches. A few drops of the waters of the Styx, philosophical dust, seeds from the cornucopia...
alchemy, technology, post-apocalypse, vulgar relic, wonderful relic, endemic technology, artifact from outside, firearm, fuel-powered vehicle, automatons, alchemical products, obscurantism, crafts, books

10 Love:

Hypnotic songs come from the engine room, putting people in a state of trance. Past lovers haunt our dreams and try to keep us in them. Large holes appear in control panels, like holes in the mud. You can put your arm in them and the ship takes you to wherever you want. Organic walls open and close under the action of a particular desire. The cabin takes us wherever it desires at growing speed.
Passion, hate, desire, fascination, pact, betrayal, sacrifice, respect, filiation, loyalty, lie, trust

11 Drives:

Your hunger for my wet body will bleed in your soul like a continuous flow. I will feed from the desire growing in you and already not yours anymore, with every step you take. You told me “always” and left me to die in this cabin, I will be at peace only when I make them all shut up. You, you, you, a little more of your body, just to forget how alone I am. Your lips, your skin, your rod, your blood pulsing inside... and even more.
Pride, greed, lust, envy, sloth, gluttony, anger, prudence, temperance, justice, courage, unconscious

12 Flesh:

Young grooms hold out their hands to bring us onto their bed. Sirhates are waiting for a kiss to revive in us a memory of ecstasy. Silverfishes, broken mirrors with a thousand reflections sail around the ruins of a basilica, we just have to catch a single one of them and we can get whatever we desire.
Fight, sex, beauty, promiscuity, disease, rot, death, bestiality, athleticism, hunger, pain, mutilation



CALIGULA OR THE OLD CANVAS BAG

A theater by Arjuna Khan
(text in public domain)

This theater pays homage to the play *Caligula* by Albert Camus and offers to reuse some of its themes like the absurd, incest, the feeling of injustice or even love.
It uses Milesvale's universe and some of its problematics, even though it lingers on a rarely explored place: the Moon, outside Milesvale.
The moon satellite has seen part of humankind prosper and out of fear of seeing again the horrific events which happened on Earth, settlers have federated under a political organization close to the Roman empire as it is often imagined. A strong army, a pronounced social hierarchy, a Caesar who can take decisions on anything and a very important group spirit.

This theater favors intrigue, strong emotional relations and Cornelian choices.

The setting in which you will play is directly inspired from ancient Rome, as it is often fantasized. Theaters, thermal baths, colonnades, arenas, banquets, orgies, luxurious villas, army of legionaries and forums are clichés you're invited to use. You can add to them elements linked to a futuristic background: space ships, cybernetic implants, cloning technology and the development of nanotechnology. You're free to integrate as many elements as you want, depending on what you want to play and for how long. This theater, through the themes table, will offer you some starting elements, you're free to add to these aspects or not, depending on what you want.

Caligula's city

Caligula's city is a city of light divided in two parts: the neighborhood of patricians and the neighborhood of plebeians. The former is made of huge and luxurious buildings, with empty spaces where gardens prosper; the latter is made of building stacked next to each other, with much equipment designed essentially to produce manufactured products.
Patricians are an elite holding power but at the same time subject to traditions and other rules. Plebeians are subject to the organization decided by the patricians but at the same time are the essential workforce for the city's power, whether as the army's strike force or by producing all sorts of things for the city. In itself, one class isn't in conflict with the other, but both are power structures strong enough for important people of the city to try and model or even manipulate them quite often.

The Freedom Sphere

It's a large glass dome covering Caligula's city on dozens of kilometers. Each hoop supporting the structure is crossed by small electric arcs, giving energy to the city. There's nothing beyond it except dusty dunes as far as the eye can see. At high altitude, decompression chambers allow ships to reach a system of canals evacuating them into space.

Drusilla

Caligula's sister. Drusilla was a sweet little girl who saw many of her parents kill each other for power. When she was younger, she was a promising child whom everybody listened to when it came to solving delicate problems. The climate of death contributed a lot to turn her extreme sensibility into an extraordinary ability for survival. An ability which, according to some, is expressed through uncommon cruelty and which made her one of the most admired and feared persons in the empire. Caligula's prolonged absence ended up shutting down any will to live in her and, one night, she took the ships' corridor and escaped toward Earth, toward Milesvale.

Caligula

A character with protruding muscles and an angel's face, Caligula is a sort of prodigal son returned to protect Drusilla from the wave of murders their lineage was victim to. His abilities to lead the troops outside of the Sphere and to always demand more from himself were enough to get him respected, then adored by his men and, as a consequence, the people. Not long after Drusilla's disappearance, he also disappeared.

Drusilla's statue

This metallic statue with copper flashes was forged by Caligula. It's the living representation of the two lovers' sin. What outrages the most, at first sight, is the extremely juvenile aspect of the representation.

What's more, the imagery toys with the limits of decency without ever crossing them. The ingenue's extremely sensual pose, the languishingly perverse look she gives to the Caesar's palace, the almost subversive way to exhibit her animality...

Preparation

To use this theater as it should be, here is some preparation advice that you might find useful.

Starting hook (to read out loud at the beginning of the session):
After long months without any news, Caligula comes back without a protection suit and with a heavy canvas bag on his back. Behind his calm attitude, Caligula is absolutely furious and the spark of madness that has lighted in him will lead him to answer with an even greater absurdity to any feeling of injustice he might see or suffer from.
What was left of his family was exterminated by prominent citizens, anxious to bring back a more serene atmosphere within the Empire and get some sort of legitimacy back for themselves.

Creating the characters:
The first sentence should say how the character feels about Caligula's return. What does he think about it? What will he do about it?

The second sentence should clarify the bonds linking him to a character played by another player (love, hate, jealousy, ambition, common project...). Note that defining intimate relationships or relationships about power games is particularly efficient. Here are some character profiles that are usually very efficient as examples:
† The demagogue speaking to the crowd, opposed to Caligula's madness.
† Caligula's tutor who tries to calm his zeal.
† The young legionary admiring Caligula and trying to catch his attention.
† A hidden survivor from Caligula's family who wants to avenge her family in a blood bath.
† Drusilla's lover who wants to plunge the city into chaos.
† The plebeian whose life was destroyed by prominent citizens' schemes and who wants to get power as a compensation.

1 Madness:
A tribunal condemns people at random and skins them alive in public, under the crowd's cheers. Every night, a story gets together in people's dreams, to warn them of a growing evil. More and more people from the lower classes amputate themselves to repent from their sins.

Hallucination, fear, phobia, personality disorder, haunting, megalomania, mind parasites, nightmares, speaking in tongues, possession, excess of lucidity, drugs.

2 Vengeance:
Prominent citizens wear clown costumes to distract Caligula, their sons and daughters have to watch the show. Caligula's former counsellors, deemed responsible for Drusilla's escape to Milesvale, are subjected to a particularly cruel judgement. Some humans, reduced to slavery, mysteriously disappear, deaths follow.

Sadism, betrayed trust, absurdity, frustration, incarceration, lost honor, old debt, extinct feelings, rage

3 Nature:
Milesvale's forest has caught the attention of scientists for its precious resources, expeditions have already been planned. Animals frantically scratch the ground, cutting their flesh and carrying a sound echoing itself in the whole city. The rain rages and doesn't stop, endangering several organs of elementary safety.

Forest, trees, animals, plants, mushrooms, parasites, infections, survival, journey, sea, mountain, desert

4 Hold:
The incestuous relation between Caligula and his younger sister have begotten a deformed child. A strange ill has been brought back from Milesvale, people forget things, often without importance but the phenomenon is getting worse. The Caesar's new fancy forces people to get a goat head tattooed on their forearms to get access to manufactured products.

Degenerescence, mutation, animalism, Shub-Niggurath, orgy, stain, monstrosity, fertility, perversion, vermin, epidemic, social corruption.

5 Lie:
Corax are among us. The strength of our armies owes to the poison flowing in our veins, we've been lied to! We all bleed of seeing our women fascinated by the image of that Drusilla, that demon of darkness and perversion swooning in the Caesar's light.

Betrayal, illusion, beast travestying as man, illusory hope, manipulation, sterile deity, light play, incorrect memory.

6 Society:
Criminals are freed from underground jails to be replaced with prominent citizens deemed guiltier than them. The population of the streets next to the Freedom Sphere falls into a brutal sleep that nothing seems to perturb. Laws are voted to plunder the patrimony of the richest in order to eradicate poverty.

City, State, morality, feudality, laws, war, anarchy, Outside, travels, commerce, philosophy, people.

7 Clan:
The law of blood prevails; those judged responsible for the massacre of the Caesar's family are pointed out and threatened with execution. Shapes are forming on the sand, figures emerge from them and peer at the city with their blind eyes. Men and women ruled innocent by the Senate are found with a withered rose in each of their hands, a symbol of unpunished faults.

Secret society, tribe, sect, friends, family, faction, alliance, debt, duty, Lodge of the Golden Masks, Corax ways, Brothers' lineage.

8 Religion:
By nightfall, the dead underground whisper prophetic announcements. The Sun God speaks through the Caesar guiding us. Drusilla's representation cries tears of blood. The old woman of the well, the Caesar's ancestor, comes out from her grave, a long white chalk in her creased fingers.

Faith, miracle, totem, taboo, heresy, piety, deity, faithfuls, dogma, transgression, curse, unbelief.

9 Science:
Caligula wants to lay hands on the old Caesar's research; he's said to have found the way to use the Moon's geomagnetic energy. The Caesar's geneticists army has been mobilized to try and capture egregore for a future use.

Alchemy, technology, post-apocalypse, vulgar relic, wonderful relic, endemic technology, artifact from outside, firearm, fuel-based vehicle, automatons, alchemical products, obscurantism, crafts, books.

10 Love:
Scipion, young dreamer and poet in love with justice, is Caligula's voice among the poor and destitute, turning their hearts thirsty for a more just society. Drusilla's lover, rotting in a jail, digs the earth with her hands, full of a love transcending death.

Passion, hate, desire, fascination, pact, betrayal, sacrifice, respect, filiation, loyalty, lie, trust.

11 Drives:
The man in black offers the vengeance Caligula dreams of in exchange for the most secret fears of his subjects.

Pride, greed, lust, envy, sloth, gluttony, anger, prudence, temperance, justice, courage, unconscious.

12 Flesh:
The wives of several prominent citizens are found naked in indecent positions, the Caesar watching the scene with a distracted look behind his cup of wine. The wounds of soldiers have stopped healing, a divine punishment is upon us! Drusilla's servants have formed a sect to punish the men who have abused her.

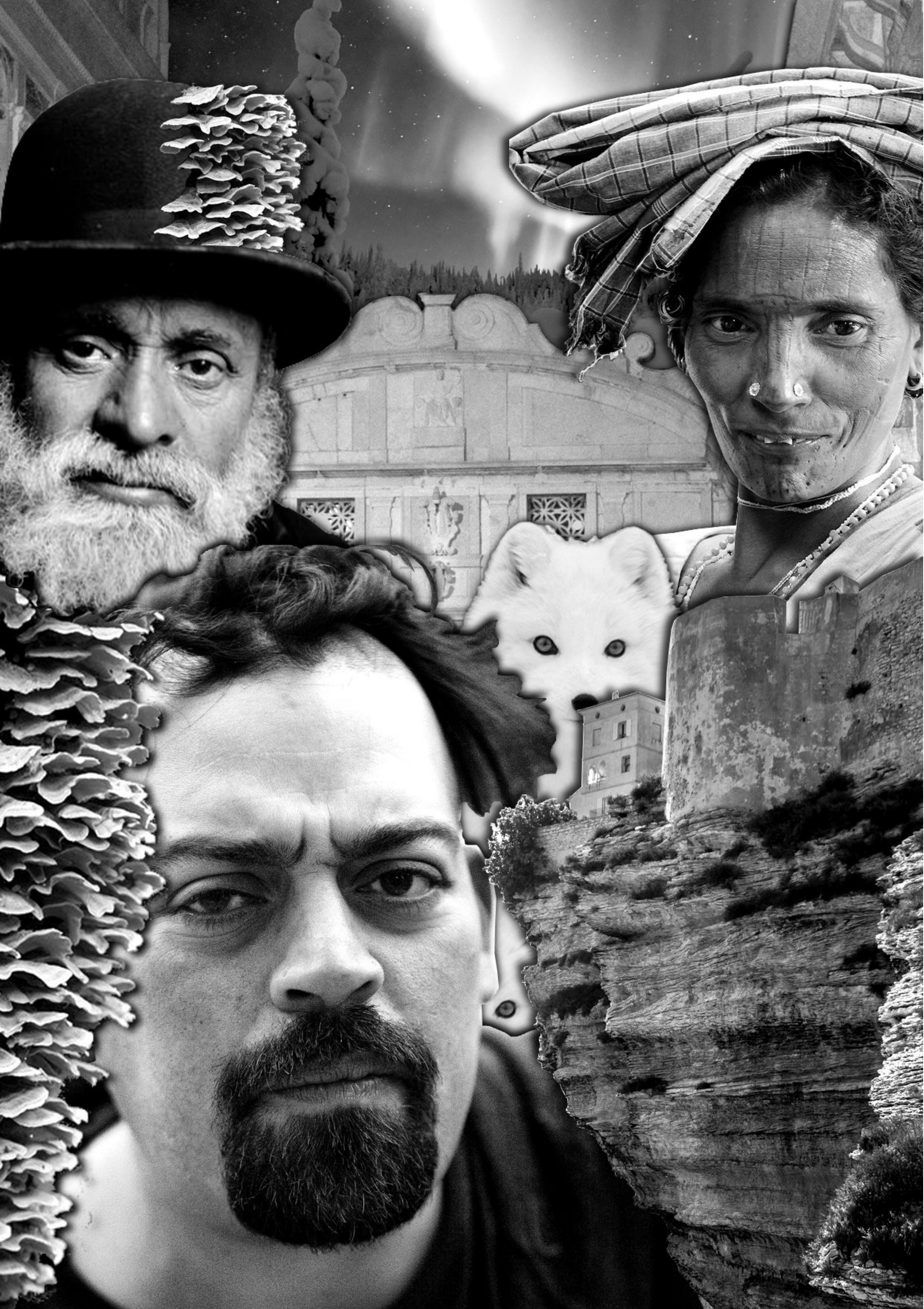
Fight, sex, beauty, promiscuity, disease, putrefaction, death, bestiality, athleticism, hunger, pain, mutilation.

EIREANN ARCHIPELAGO

A theater by Kantelder
(text in public domain)

The Eireann Archipelago is made of islands surrounded by a mystical mist. It carries people from one island to the next, as if it was in phase with the one being transported.

1 **Madness:** (I hate you because you're part of the others)
Welcome to Belfast Island, the scene of an endless battle between two religions for reasons lost in time.
2 **Memory:** (The Fae King as an archivist engraving humankind—the stones of Wicklow as Eireann's memory)
What are these monoliths being built every night on Wicklow Island? Who is this Oberon grieving for his Titania? Why does he tell of past losses by engraving the stones?
3 **Nature:** (An ecosystem linked to the Mist)
What is this Mist carrying people between islands? It brings you to an island full of game when you're hungry, to a freshwater reserve when you're thirsty. But some say it takes a little bit of your soul.
4 **Hold**: The Mist as a defense against the Outside world or a slow protectionist defense.
5 **Egregore:** Fomori, giant, Fae, the Snake, the Mist...
6 **Society:** Anarchy, the islands' leaders (the Misty, condemned to not feel anything anymore) believe each island fulfills a task for the Mist.
7 **Clan:** Lost in the mist, have you lost people dear to you? What have you done for it to turn your deepest wish down?
8 **Religion:** (St. Patrick) Who is this mad and charismatic predicator wandering through the islands, looking for the Snake?
9 **Science:** People in swimsuits are found. There's word of a wall off the coast of the islands.
10 **Love:** Bantry's Rose is the mother, the subject of sad songs about lost souls. Are they hanging themselves in her thorns?
11 **Drives:** Who makes this alcohol driving people mad?
12 **Flesh:** An island of bare-hand Gladiators, the perfection of bodies, bruises, broken ribs. Why? For whom?



ITERATION

A theater by Côme Martin
(text in public domain)

An office watches over time, making sure it flow correctly. It is said Milesvale's monstrosity was written and cannot be erased, but there are still stains left by egregore that Iteration's employees must get rid of. Deep within the forest, in the dark past, the muddy present and the uncertain future, time agents are sent to re-establish truth, order and causality; but the universe is tough and there are many who do not come back, devoured by paradoxes, oblivion or much more tangible threats. Others welcome Milesvale as a haven where they can reinvent themselves, away from the corporation's watch, whom they accuse of having fulfilled its own ambitions for the all-consuming forest...

† What is the mission given to the agents? What information do they have about it?
† Is Iteration really so benevolent?
† How does time travel happen? Is it through foolproof means?
† Who else, unbeknown to all, moves through the peat of time?
† Can the past be changed? Can the future be avoided?
† How do Milesvale's inhabitants, beasts, trees react to the intrusion of time travelers?

... Play in several eras at once or in parallel realities; play a scene without saying when it takes place and decide it later (or not); revisit scenes already played, again and again; use and abuse of flashbacks and flashforwards; an extra turns out to be a past or future version of a character; a character exists in several periods at once, his mind wandering effortlessly from one to the next; the story repeats itself, its last and first scenes are identical...

1 Causality:
1. past, 2. present, 3. future, 4. flashforward, 5. flashback, 6. butterfly effect, 7. continuity, 8. ellipse, 9. fatalism, 10. unforeseen consequences, 11. end of the world, 12. parallel universe

2 Memory:
1. oblivion, 2. shared memories, 3. total amnesia, 4. amnesiac agent, 5. lie, 6. rewriting History, 7. déjà-vu, 8. false memories, 9. log book, 10. premonition, 11. regrets, 12. eidetic memory

3 Nature:
1. omnipresent forest, 2. trees, 3. strange animals, 4. invading moss, 5. hallucinogenic mushrooms, 6. parasites, 7. dried-up river, 8. contagion, 9. relentless growth, 10. changing landscape, 11. unstable climate, 12. uncertain cartography

4 Hold:
1. degenerescence, 2. mutation, 3. monstrosity, 4. epidemic, 5. vermin, 6. social corruption, 7. perversion, 8. origin of evil, 9. time invasion, 10. rotten provisions, 11. gradual decay, 12. damaged equipment

5 Egregore:
1. legends, 2. rumors, 3. psychic remanence , 4. specters, 5. Horlas, 6. haunting, 7. time bonds, 8. metamorphoses, 9. illusion, 10. superstitions, 11. vision of the future, 12. unavoidable fate

6 Society:
1. wrecked city, 2. remote clan, 3. day-to-day survival, 4. travels, 5. commerce, 6. war, 7. anarchy, 8. incomprehensible laws, 9. Historical figure, 10. future hero, 11. united people, 12.secret society

7 Iteration:
1. sleeping agent, 2. double agent, 3. megalomaniac agent, 4. insane agent,
5. official mission, 6. secret goal, 7. questionable ethics, 8. constant surveillance,
9. corporatist interests, 10. opposed factions, 11. rescue, 12. last hope

8 Madness:
1. hallucinations, 2. megalomania, 3. pathological curiosity, 4. paranoia, 5. loss of temporal bearings, 6. disorientation, 7. split personality,
8. morbid fascination, 9. unconsciousness of danger, 10. totemic devotion,
11. hylophobia (fear of forests), 12. feeling of immortality

9 Science:
1. time machine, 2. futuristic technology, 3. collecting data,
4. relic of the past, 5. devastating weapon, 6. almost empty refill,
7. brilliant scientist, 8. experimentation, 9. rare material, 10. unplanned malfunction,
11. anachronistic equipment, 12. diabolical machine

10 Relations:
1. loyalty, 2. fear, 3. fascination, 4. betrayal, 5. trust, 6. hierarchy,
7. hidden filiation, 8. ally, 9. opponent, 10.unreachable friendship,
11. impossible love, 12. suspicion

11 Emotions:
1. unconscious, 2. courage, 3. justice, 4. anger, 5. prudence, 6. pride,
7. envy, 8. fright, 9. ardor, 10. violence, 11. jealousy, 12. disgust

12 Paradox:
1. time creature, 2. double from the future, 3. time loop,
4. object without an origin, 5. self-fulfilling prophecy, 6.time bubble,
7. retrocausality, 8.blending of time periods, 9. reality falling apart,
10. temporal diffraction, 11. time slowing down, 12. time speeding up



REFERENCES

Go where you want, die where you must.

Roleplaying games

Inflorenza's style and game design are inspired by glorious ancestors and tenors of the avant-garde.

Seth Ben-Ezra / *Dirty Secrets*
For the way authority is shared, for the game's qualities and flaws.

Christoph Boeckle / *Unspeakable*
For unspeakable horror and the joy of hurting one's own character.

Rebecca S. Borgstrom / *Nobilis*
For its artistic achievement and its exceeding of play limits.

Carlos B. García Aparicio / *Anima: Beyond Fantasy*
For its ambition, its freedom, its high-powered heroes. And for its flaws.

Matthew D. Grau, Fraser McKay / *Cthulhutech*
For the futuristic transposition of unspeakable horror, for its mechs.

Fabien Hildwein / *Monostatos*
For its liberating heroes, its style and the symbolism of its environment.

Ben Lehman / *Chivalric Tragedy at the Utmost North*
For its game design, ritualism, tragedy and Pyrrhic victories.

Sandy Petersen & co. / *Call of Cthulhu*
For unspeakable horror, H.P. Lovecraft, Shub-Niggurath, the King in Yellow.

Johan Scipion / *Sombre*
For its management of horror and its technical refinement. See *Millevaux Sombre*.

Frédéric Sintes / *Prosopopée*
For the sharing of authority, the relations between man and nature, object and memory.

John Wick & co. / *Secrets of the Seventh Sea*
For court and swashbuckling adventures, its folklore and its game design.

Literature

Milesvale's universe is first and foremost an aggregation of folklores, but *Inflorenza* is also based on literary references and looks for their flavor.

William Burroughs / *The Naked Lunch*
Drug folklore, orgone accumulators, organic horror, absurdity.

Bertolt Brecht / *Life of Galileo*
Obscurantism, religion, science, Renaissance, ideals, sacrifice and cowardice.

Maurice Druon / *The Accursed Kings*
Dynasties, History, betrayal, feudality, tragedy, religion, people and kings.

Umberto Ecco / *The Name of the Rose*
Obscurantism, labyrinths, libraries, heresy, inquisition, superstition.

Gabriel García Márquez / *A Hundred Years of Solitude*
Magical realism, rural folklore, carnal and colorful characters.

Homer / *The Iliad*
Proud heroes, killing enemies by the hundreds, defying Gods.

Robert E. Howard / *Conan*
Barbarian heroes destined to become kings, epic battles, hideous monsters.

Howard P. Lovecraft / *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath*
Dark fantasy, oneirism, strange travels, Mythological Entities and madness.

Georges R.R. Martin / *A Song of Fire and Ice*
Feudality, family, clan, betrayals, violence, moral ambiguity, tragedy.

Robert Merle / *Malevil*
Apocalypse, rurality, community, moral revolution, sects, bravery.

Marion Zimmer Bradley / *The Mists of Avalon*
Quest for the Grail, chivalry, sorcery, druidism, Christianity, sexuality.

Filmography

Inflorenza's universe will mostly call for your own fantasies, but some cinematographic references will give you an idea of the visual and stylistic stances.

Bryan Singer / *X-Men*
Supermen living in secret among men, dilemmas related to power.

Kenneth Branagh / *Frankenstein*
The pain of being a monster, the hatred of superstitious crowds.

Patrice Chéreau / *La Reine Margot*
Religion wars, alcoves of power, splendors and miseries of the court.

Richard Loncraine / *Richard III*
The appropriation of power by the most cruel men. Tyranny.

John Hillcoat / *The Road*
The difficulty of keeping a moral bearing in a devastated and anarchic world.

Klaus Kinski / *Aguirre, the Wrath of God*
Man conquering nature, pride, perdition, mystical delirium.

Ian Kounen / *Blueberry*
Western, shamanism, mythological entities, bastards, drugs, sexuality.

Hayao Miyazaki / *Spirited Away*
Strangeness, specters and waking dreams given life by egregore.

Hayao Miyazaki / *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*
The positive role of hold, the pride of men, wild nature.

Hayao Miyazaki / *Princess Mononoke*
Men against nature, forest deities, savagery, progress.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul / *Tropical Malady*
Jungle, shamanism, sensuality, mystical visions, hunt, predator, prey.

Comics-graphy

Andreas / *Rork*
Visual audacity, blending of genres, steampunk, Lovecraftian horror.

David Chauvel and Jérôme Lereculey / *Arthur*
Celtic vision of the Arthurian legend, chivalry, heroism and barbarism.

Emmanuel Civiello / *La Graine de Folie*
Black fantasy, faery, celticism, Fomori, end of a world, crows.

Didier Convard and Christian Gine / *Neige*
Post-apocalyptic polar Europe. One of Milesvale's foundations.

Guy Davis / *Le Marquis*
Organic horror, Renaissance. Dante's Hell and comedia dell'arte.

Stephen Desberg and Enrico Marini / *Le Scorpion*
Swashbuckling, religious plot, carnal heroes and villains, passioned.

Jean Dufaux and Grzegorz Rosinski / *La Complainte des Landes Perdues*
Crepuscular fantasy, hostile environment, bastards, martyrs, courtesans.

Jean Dufaux and Béatrice Tillier / *Le Bois des Vierges*
Man is a wolf to man, man is a wolf to wolf.

Hermann / *Jeremiah*
Post-apocalyptic western, technological levels, morality and cruelty.

Yukito Kishiro / *Gunnm*
Post-apo cyberpunk, egregore as chi, psychometry.

Mike Mignolia & co. / *Hellboy*
Unspeakable horror, steampunk, pulp, world folklore, egregore, deities.

Lionel Richerand / *Dans la forêt*
Black tale, cryptozoology, faery, egregore, vegetal symbionts, oneirism.

Discography

My book *Musiques Sombres pour Jeux de Rôles Sombres* (“Dark music for dark roleplaying games”) as well as the gigantic Milesvale playlist are a choice basis to add sound to *Inflorenza*. Here are a few suggestions.

Bloody Panda / *Summon*
Lyrical and ritual drone, incantatory, cyclopean, demonic, Assyrian.

Brame / *La nuit, les charrues*
Rural post-Americana, bark strings ploughing the dark night.

Boris / *At last feedbacker*
Shoegaze ethereal drone, deep as a lake, dense as a forest.

Candlemass / *Nightfall*
Epic metal doom with clear singing, heroic, hallucinated tragedy.

Current 93 / *Aleph At Hallucinatory Mountain*
Prophetic electrified dark folk, folklore of cabala and full moon.

Empyrium / *Weiland*
Germanic dark folk under the light of a full moon, at the heart of the forest.

Fall of Efrafa / *Owsla* / *Elil* / *Inle* trilogy
Epic, feverish forest post-hardcore, ongoing suffering.

Jesu / *Heartache*
Hallucinated post-industrial music between the hell of ruins and the beauty of the sky.

Diamanda Galas / *Divine Punishment & Saint of the Pit*
Polymorphous gothic singing, imprecation of poetry and black magic.

Im Dunkeln / *Den Hellige Skogs Hemmeligheter*
Ambient post-black metal with keyboards, fire, ice, hordes and the forest.

Phurpa / *Nag Bdud Ceremony*
Dysphonic tibetan sacred songs, ritual of cosmic horror, cavernous temple.

Moonsorrow / *Tulimyrsky EP*
Viking metal, bloody epic battle by the icy fjords.

Mozart / *Requiem*
Opera and great mass for tragic heroes, serial killers and the living dead.

Nadja / *Radiance of Shadows*
Shoegaze drone, slow procession of the King in Yellow at the end of the world.

Neurosis & Jarboe / *Self-titled*
Mystical, post-hardcore journey of an out of breath feminine singing.

Om / *God is Good*
Orientalizing drone / doom / dub, opening the gates of perception.

Paganini / *Concertos*
Fury of violins to light the flame of Renaissance Milesvale.

Primordial / *To the nameless Dead*
Revolutionary pagan metal to fight at the evening of the fall of Rome.

Shora / *Malval*
Minimalistic luminous post-rock for a sublime perdition in the forest.

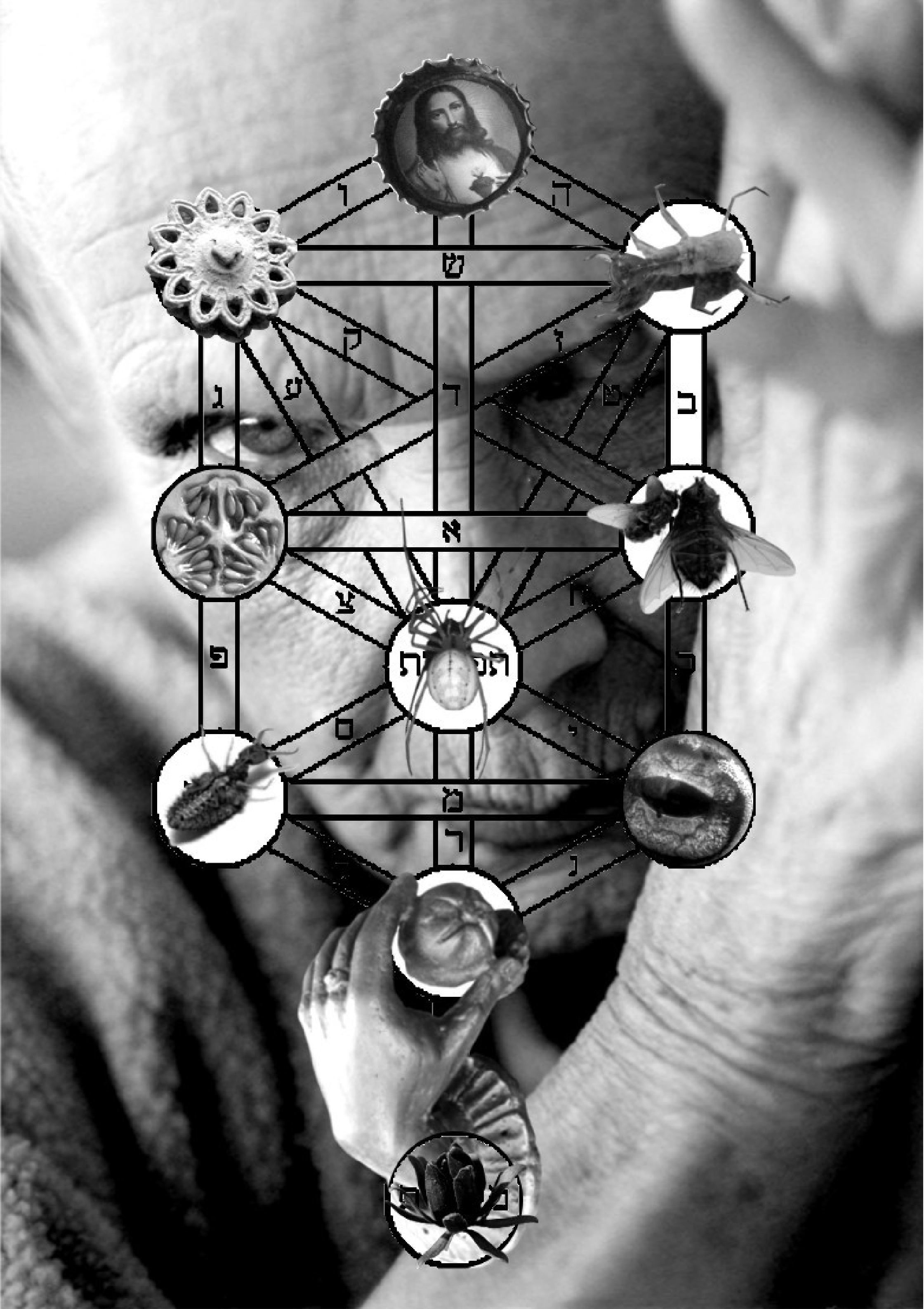
Skepticism / *Stormcrowfleet*
Telluric doom metal, cavernous call of mythological entities.

Sophia / *Deconstruction of the World*
Dark ambient orchestral on the day of getting out from the nuclear shelter.

Therion / *Vovin*
Symphonic metal with lyrical feminine choirs, racy orchestration.

Neil Young / OST of the movie *Dead Man*
Acoustic post-Americana for a peyotl-induced western and an initiatory quest.

Nors'klh / *La Haine Primordiale : Préface au Néant*
Electro for the advent of future tyrants and old threats.


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Thanks

Thanks for reading my book!

I'm open to any reading feedback and to any suggestion about the news I could offer you. In a larger way, I'm at your disposal.

If you liked or hated what you read, please write a public opinion on your personal page, your blog or your favorite message board. I'd be grateful.

You can find my personal folklore and my study of the creative process, with many guests, on the Outsider blog (in French):
http://outsider.rolepod.net/

Outsider is updated every Sunday but you can find even more information with Outsider daily, every day on Facebook, Google+ and Twitter:
http://www.facebook.com/folkloreoutsider

Google +: Thomas Munier

Twitter: @Outsider_Daily

Sincerely,

Thomas Munier

Thomas Munier, bibliography, ludography

Roleplaying game, play aid:
† *Musiques Sombres pour Jeux de Rôle Sombres* *(Dark music for dark roleplaying games)*
To drape a veil of terror on your session's horrific moments.

Roleplaying game:
† *Millevaux Sombre* *(Dark Milesvale)*
The post-apocalyptic, sludgecore, forest supplement for Sombre.
† *S'échapper des Faubourgs* *(Escaping the Suburbs)*
A pocket nightmare in an hallucinated suburb.
† *Dragonfly Motel*
A mirage-game for reckless travelers.
† *Psychomeurtre* *(Psychomurder)*
The best profilers against the worst serial killers.
† *Inflorenza Minima*
Cruel tales in Milesvale's forest.

Universe books:
† *Millevaux : Civilisation* *(Milesvale: Civilization)*
Societies, anarchies and solitudes, man facing his bestiality in the forest.

Novels:
† *La Guerre en Silence* *(The War in Silence)*
Urban folklore, a love story, a conspiracy thriller.
† *Hors de la Chair* *(Outside of Flesh)*
Spectral terrorism in the urban maze of superstition.

Short texts:
† *Glossôs*
Rural science-fiction and urban legends, wheat fields and trains never reaching their destination, a canvas of straw fires.
† *Erreurs de Jeunesse* *(Youthful Mistakes)*
Flesh, passion, pain, violence, death, ambiguity, drugs, extra-sensorial experiences, exploring other worlds. In verse.


奉納
2013. 4.20
可愛い南が元気に
産まれてくれました。
本当にありがとうございました。

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